

SHARK BYTES: An Expert Separates Fear from Fact, pg. 21

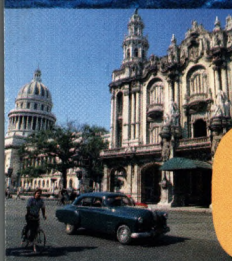
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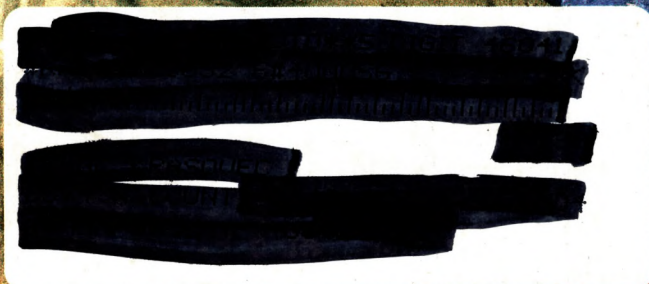
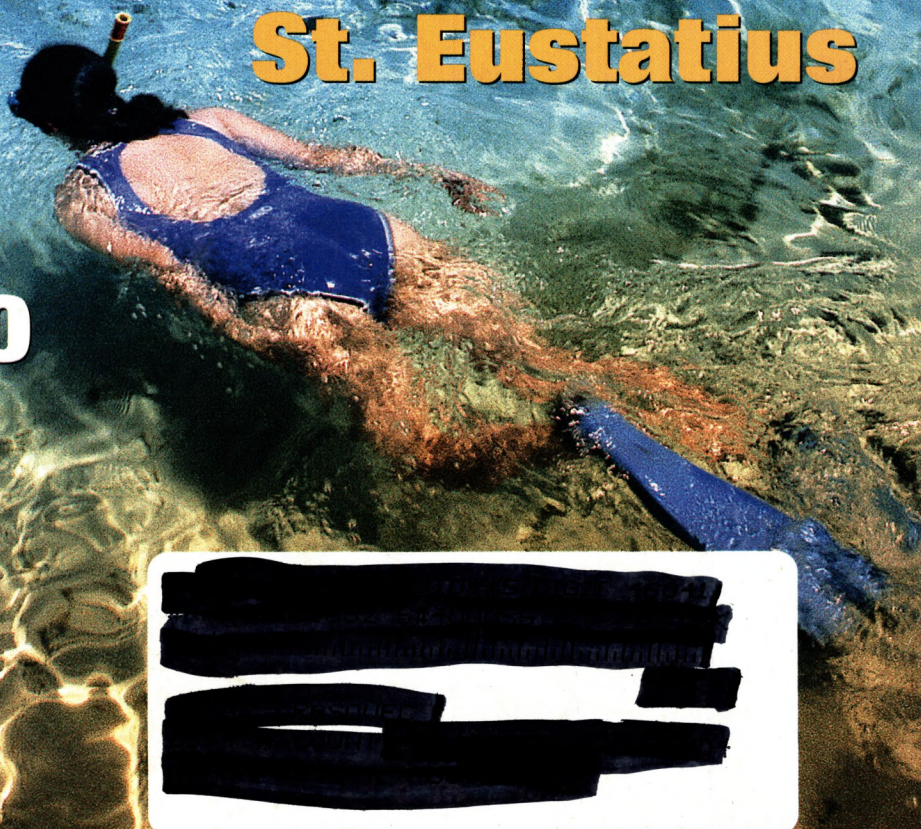
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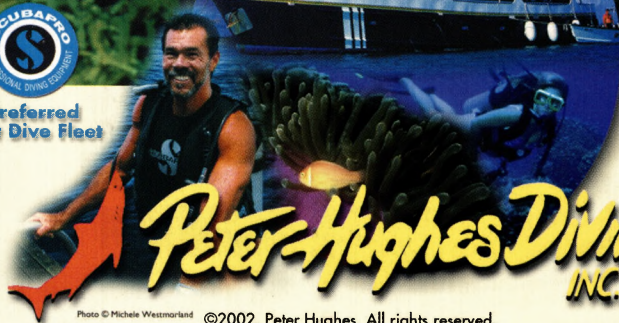
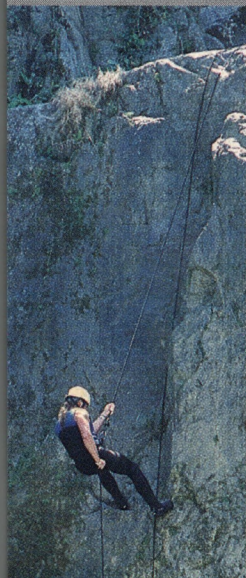


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features

48 GREAT REGS UNDER \$400—PART 2
Quality, performance and price are the blessed trinity of every great equipment purchase. DARYL CARSON discovers four more regs that will make you shout, "Hallelujah!"

EXCLUSIVE! Renowned underwater photographer DAVID DOUBILET and travel companion JENNIFER HAYES take a first look at two Caribbean gems: Saba and St. Eustatius.

56 DIVING CARIBBEAN SUMMITS—SABA
Geology defines this respite from urban sprawl and "civilization." Here, the underwater pinnacles draw big crowds, but only a few divers.

62 AMONG THE SHARDS OF HISTORY—ST. EUSTATIUS
A bustling port of the New World and an early friend to the American colonies, diving Saba is a lesson in history and life.

68 CUBA CAPITALIST STYLE
Our lowly writer/photographer hitches his wagon to a friend's luxury yacht and journeys back in time to the Caribbean as it must have been. For ERIC HANAUER, Cuba proves a dream come true.

80 THE KONA CLASSIC—DAYS OF GLORY
Skin Diver readers joined the magazine and a bevy of world-class photographers for a week of diving, shooting and sunning on Hawaii's Big Island. MICHELLE DANNER reports.

ABOUT THE COVER:

A snorkeler slides into Cuban waters.

PHOTO: KIKE CALVO

Background photo: Anchor dating to the 18th Century at the dive site Double Wreck off St. Eustatius.

PHOTO: DAVID DOUBILET



departments

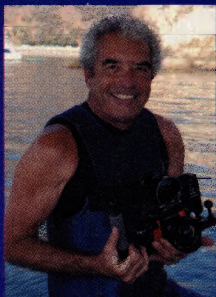
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ERIC HANAUER jumped at a recent opportunity to dive Cuba—that forbidden Caribbean jewel. Through his lens and pen we get a taste this issue of the next great diving destination.



"C u b a," says Hanauer,

may come from a Russian Neva, transmission from a Yugo, and brake fluid made from a concoction of vegetable oil and other mysterious ingredients. But they are passed down from generation to generation and keep on running.

"In much of the world, soccer is the national pastime, but in Cuba, baseball is still king. Their national team is a world power, and continues to produce major leaguers from defectors. Street baseball is played by kids from 8 to 18. However, real

The old American cars of the 1950s there are a throwback to the days of diners, Saturday night cruising and 'Cuban Graffiti.' A few are in showroom condition, but most are daily drivers, held together with bondo and primer.

"allowed me to indulge two of my passions: cars and baseball.

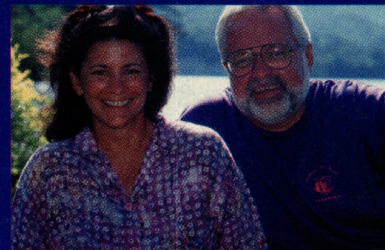
"The old American cars of the 1950s there are a throwback to the days of diners, Saturday night cruising and 'Cuban Graffiti.' A few are in showroom condition, but most are daily drivers, held together with bondo and primer. Pistons

baseballs would crack the sticks that the kids use as bats, so they use a ball of packing tape. Time outs are taken for pedestrians and traffic."

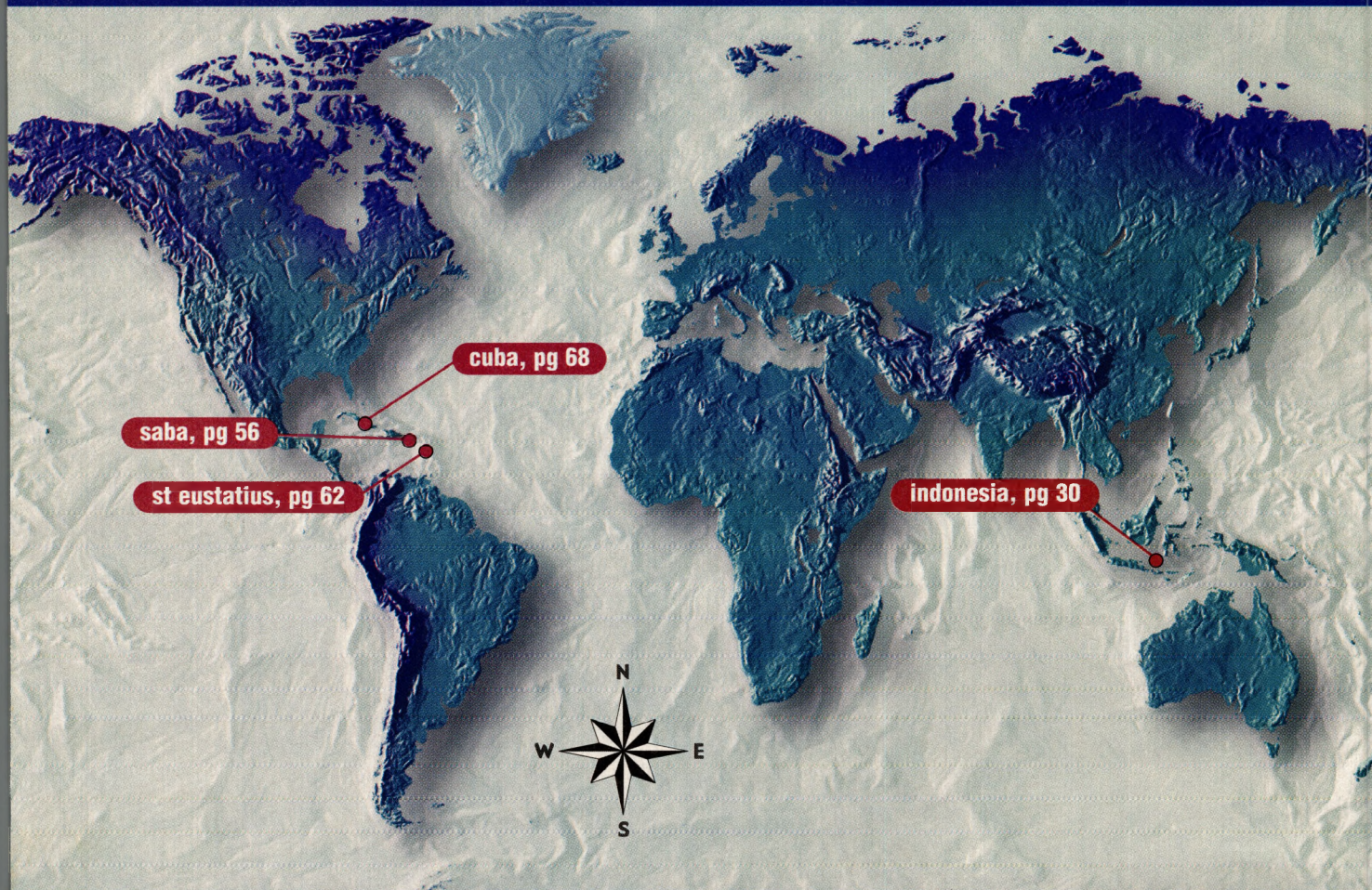
Every few weeks, *Skin Diver* receives a brown paper package in the mail, decorated with foreign stamps and odd post-

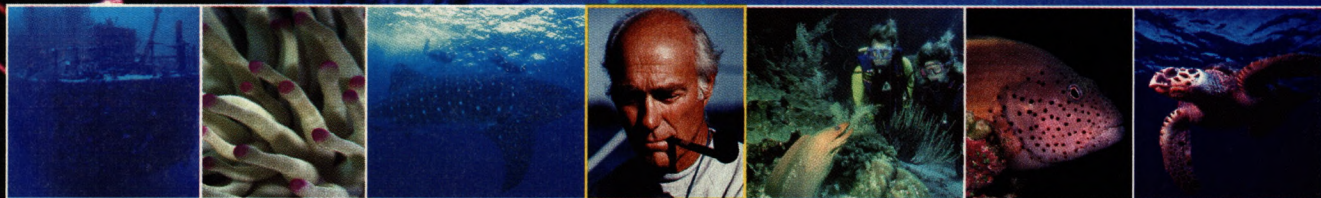
marks. It comes from **LARRY TACKETT & DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT**, who have been diving the far reaches of Indonesia. From their experience comes this month's *Encounters* column.

Here, Denise offers an insight into their highly technical approach to documenting wildlife: "We can pick out many camouflaged animals that prefer to go undetected, but when an animal



knows its cover has been blown, it usually races off. To counter this, we pretend not to notice it by avoiding eye contact and hiding behind our cameras. We're not sure if this works, or if the animal simply relaxes after a few minutes, but it helps us get the shot we want."





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BRACE YOURSELF. I'VE JUST HEARD THAT JFK IS STILL ALIVE, AND...HE'S DIVING IN CUBA!

OK, not really. But, I did suggest that we write that on the cover this issue. You see, our corporate circulation department is always looking for something catchy, but they're not divers. So, let's say we come up with something incredibly cool, like we send David Doubilet somewhere he's never been before—Saba and Statia—to capture incredible images and then publish the story (*ahem...*) and we put it on the

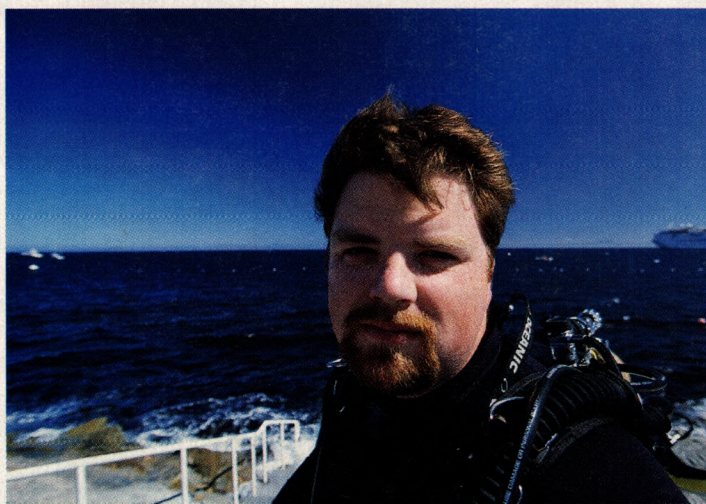
Diving for Dollars

cover. Well, circulation always calls back and says, "That's nice and all that Mr. um...*Dubois?*...went somewhere, but that doesn't really have a lot of mass appeal. Can you maybe say it was Elvis?"

Sure. You bet.

The fundamental problem is that divers communicate on a different level than the rest of the stinking masses. We say, "Hundred-foot viz." They say, "A good smog day in Los Angeles." We say, "Pelagic schooling." They say, "Couldn't get into Ivy League." We say, "Macro heaven." They say, "I haven't heard of them. Are they any good?"

So, when it comes to great diving, we say, "Cuba!" They say, "Huh?" Most travelers simply think of Cuba as a place for cigars, old cars and political oppression. And while each seems in fine supply,



bubble-blowers have also been discovering that Cuba has some of the best, untapped diving in the Caribbean. It is, as they say, the way the Caribbean used to be. The horribly ironic part is that this preservation has come as an unexpected side effect of Cuba's political system, which has oppressed its people, restricted their travels and generally thwarted their every attempt to step more than five feet off the beach.

However, many people believe that it is only a matter of time before that changes.

You see, Cuba's appeal to divers is both the chance to dive fantastic reefs, and also the allure of visiting a communist state that is slowly succumbing to the pressures of capitalism.

Maybe we can help them along with a headline in the next issue: "Castro to Wed Marilyn Monroe Underwater!—Pepsi Bidding for Sponsorship."

Yeah, I think circulation is gonna like that. 🐠

DARYL CARSON, EDITOR

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JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU
ENVIRONMENTAL EDITOR

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FIELD EDITOR

ART

KIMBERLY RICHEY
ART DIRECTOR

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ASSOCIATE ART DIRECTOR

NORB GARRETT
VP GROUP PUBLISHER/EDITORIAL DIRECTOR

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

ALFRED A. BOVE, M.D., PH.D.
ELLSWORTH BOYD • ANNA AND NED DeLOACH
FRED GARTH • PAUL HUMANN
SCOTT D. JONES • PHIL NUYTTEN
KARL SHREEVES • DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT
LARRY TACKETT • NORBERT WU • WYLAND

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DARYL CARSON
EDITOR

MICHELLE DANNER
ASSOCIATE PUBLISHER

GROUP MANAGEMENT

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ARNOLD AYERS/SPECIAL UNITS

LOS ANGELES EDITORIAL OFFICES

6420 Wilshire Boulevard
Los Angeles, CA 90048-5515
(323) 782-2960 • Fax (323) 782-2121
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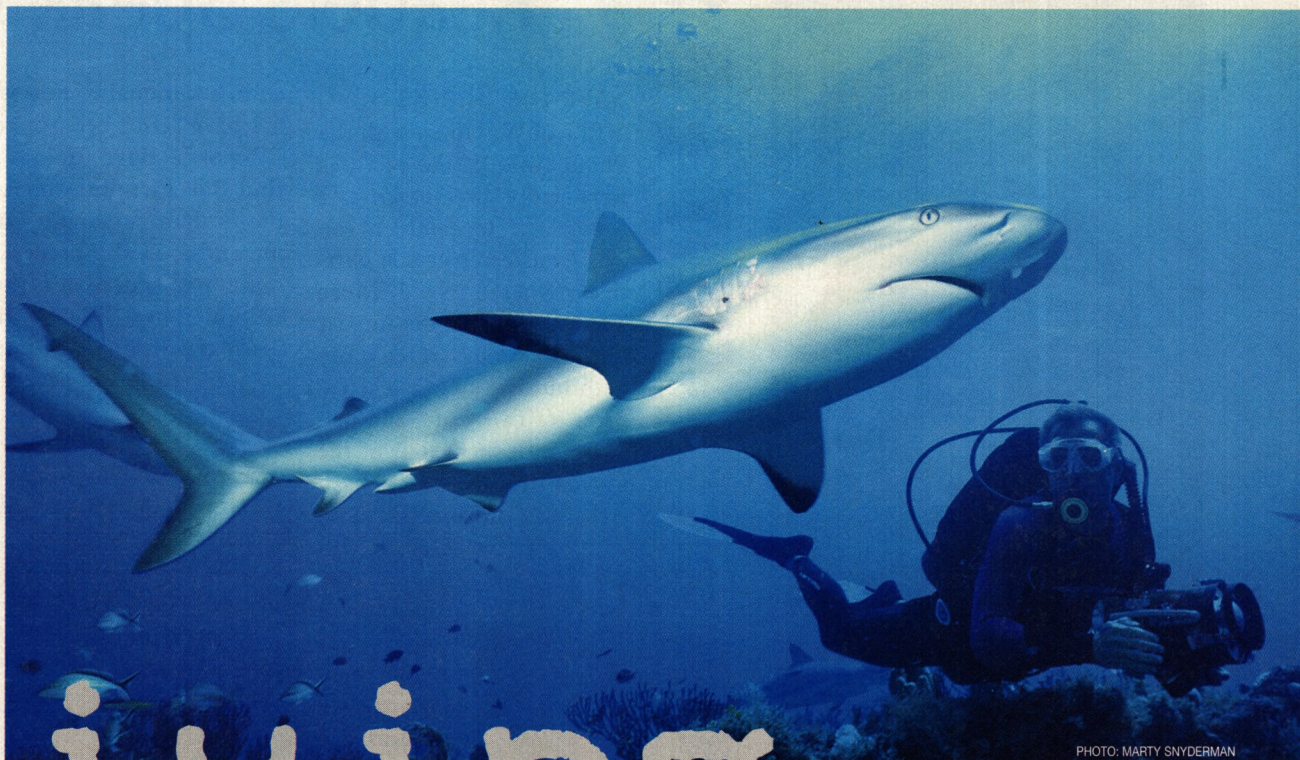


PHOTO: MARTY SNYDERMAN

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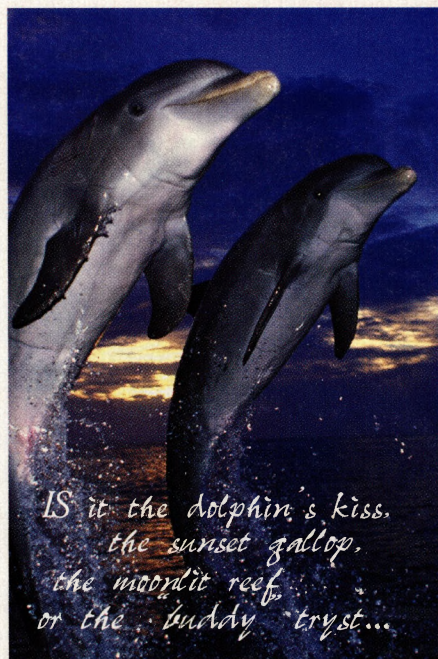
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LETTERS

Readers Speak Out

Save the Sharks

Bravo! Way to go with the Photo Annual, the pictures were truly breathtaking. I would like to comment on Mr. Cousteau's article entitled "Sharks Need More Than Words," in the August issue. I couldn't agree more with him. I've been a scuba diver for two years, and just last month spent four of the most memorable dives with Caribbean Reef Sharks off Grand Bahama

Island. On one of the dives there was about 12 of them just circling within a safe dis-

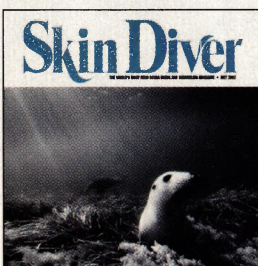


Photo Annual collectors edition 2002

tance of us and this went on for the entire dive, about 40 minutes. We just sat on the bottom and let them observe us....

Those experiences and my love of all marine creatures has prompted the question, what can I and perhaps others like myself, do to help protect these misunderstood and grossly feared animals?

— Shelli Nichols, via e-mail

To get involved, visit www.oceanfutures.com or www.worldwildlife.org.

—Ed.

Wreck Facts...and Rewards

Just wanted to drop a quick note to tell you how much I enjoy Boyd's Wreck Facts column. I live on the Great Lakes and am always interest-

ed in additional or new wreck sites.

I have [also] been in contact with Ellsworth Boyd in an attempt to find Bob Fleming's books. He took the time to personally write back to me and is in the process of searching for a source for these limited edition items. Thanks again for a great column and author.

—Bill Picard, via e-mail

Whaling Loop Hole

As a volunteer diver for the Monterey Bay Aquarium, a member of Sea Otter Rehab and Conservation, as well as the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, I am disappointed that my favorite dive magazine has made no reference to the continued killing of small whales and dolphins for sport and consumption in the Caribbean Islands.

Under Article 11 of the Protocol for Specially Protected Areas and Wildlife (SPAW), the orders of cetacea: All species are protected in the Islands of St. Lucia, St. Vincent & the Grenadines, Antigua, Dominica, Grenada, St. Kitts and Nevis.

However, a "local resident" loop-hole allows local fishermen to conduct harpoon hunts for the tourist trade on small whales and dolphins, including Pygmy Sperm Whales, Pygmy Killer Whales, Pilot Whales, Risso's Dolphins, Bottlenose Dolphins and Rough Toothed Dolphins. That whale watching and whale killing are occurring in the same waters is tragically ironic.

In my experience, all serious divers eventually become marine conservationists to some degree. As a widely read and respected magazine, you have the power to affect change by making the diving community aware of these activities, and in so doing, hopefully encourage these island governments to put a stop to this cruel practice.

— Thomas Heinemann, via e-mail

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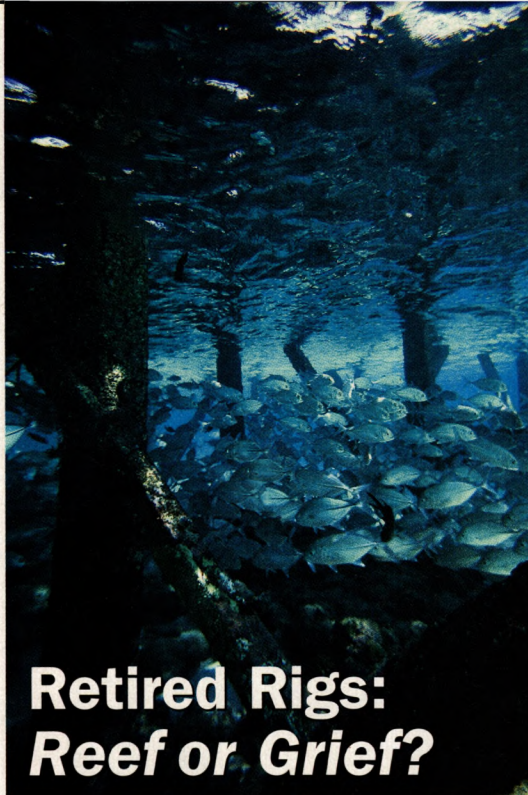
EDITED BY RYAN ALLEN

FOR MANY CALIFORNIANS, offshore oil rigs are both an eyesore and an environmental threat. While our need for fuel demands continued drilling, international headlines declaring industrial accidents and the resulting effect on resident wildlife illicit fear.

But now, many of the steel structures that once actively extracted thousands of barrels of oil are barren. And, ironically, these same rigs that once threatened our offshore ecosystems are providing refuge for much of its underwater flora and fauna. Many environmentalists who once strongly opposed the installation of these constructs are now committed to keeping them intact. But in California three congressional bills favoring the preservation of these unlikely habitats in state waters were introduced to the legislature over the past four years. All were rejected.

Senator Dede Alpert (D-Coronado) sponsored the most recent legislation. Nora Lynn, a member of Alpert's staff, stated that while every rig may not house immense fish populations, research has shown many to be flourishing nurseries.

Linda Krop, Chief Executive Director of the Environmental



Retired Rigs: Reef or Grief?

Defense Center (EDC), disagrees and feels that although some fish are found under rigs, the structures continue to pose a threat to sea life as well as humans. There is concern that toxic materials may eventually leak from the platforms. In addition, leaving these rigs in place could release oil companies from their original agreement to pay for removal.

On the flip side, Lynn says, "The monies initially intended for removal would be reallocated into an environmental/educational fund that we can only dream about." She adds that an environmental impact report would be required for each rig to determine if the structure contributes to our marine ecosystem or not.

There is currently a federal law that protects and requires the evaluation of all rigs in federal waters. Under this umbrella, structures with prolific animal inhabitation will remain. The tops of all rigs will be removed, but components below 80 feet will be left untouched. Unfortunately, not all California rigs are in federal waters, and under current legislation, those that are not will be removed without evaluation.

To get involved, contact Senator Dede Alpert's Office (senator.alpert@sen.ca.gov) or the Environmental Defense Center (info@edcnet.org). —Georgienne Bradley & JoAnna Montoya

CATCH & COOK

Survivor superchef Keith Famie discovers delicacies amongst the ruins in Greece

GREECE IS HOME TO SOME OF THE MOST REMARKABLE underwater sites and oldest shipwrecks on the planet.

GRILLED OCTOPUS

INGREDIENTS:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 3 lb. octopus or whole squid, cleaned | Juice of 2 lemons |
| 1 ½ cup olive oil | 1 ½ tbsp fresh oregano, chopped |
| ¾ cup red wine vinegar | 1 tbsp basil, chopped |
| 3 cloves garlic, minced | To taste salt and ground black pepper |

PROCEDURE:

- 1) In a large stockpot, bring water to a boil and reduce to a simmer. Add octopus to the pot and simmer for 30 minutes. Remove octopus and chill. 2) Place cooled octopus in a deep casserole dish. Season octopus with salt and black pepper. In a mixing bowl, whisk together the olive oil, vinegar, garlic, lemon juice, oregano and basil to make the marinade. Pour marinade over the octopus. Let octopus marinate and refrigerate for 8 to 10 hours. 3) Preheat grill. Remove octopus from the marinade. (Discard marinade.) Grill octopus for 10 minutes. Turn over and grill for an additional 10 minutes. 4) Remove octopus from the grill. Chop octopus into pieces and serve while hot. Serves six.

However, scuba diving in Greece is severely limited in all but a handful of spots (Corfu, Mykonos and Athens just about covers it). Rumor has it that these few remaining locations won't be open long. So, the word to the wise is to suit up, explore and enjoy.

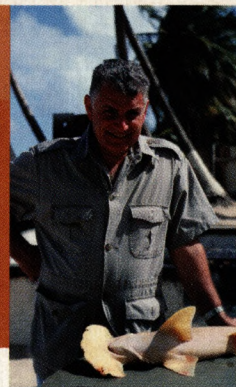
On Hydra, an isle off the Peloponnese Peninsula, I had a chance to shoulder my spearfishing gear and seek out the one critter that's still in abundance and one of the absolute delights of the Greek table: octopus.

Greek divers have a unique method for tenderizing freshly caught octopus, which I witnessed firsthand. They took each mollusk by its eight legs and struck it 50 or 60 times against the craggy rocks that lined the beach. It was wild to witness, but resulted in mouthwatering morsels from the deep. The accompanying recipe can be prepared using squid, which is widely available, but if you can find octopus, it's better. And I suggest that you marinate it to achieve this melt-in-your-mouth tenderness after parboiling it. —Keith Famie



Shark FAQs: An expert talks about fear and fascination

WE ALL KNOW THAT *JAWS* WAS FICTIONAL AND THAT THE GREAT WHITE SHARK IN THE MOVIE was a mechanical robot of plastic and rubber. Yet even the bravest divers still harbor some uneasiness about the prospect of getting up close and personal with a shark in the wild. To learn more about these fascinating but fearsome predators, we spoke with Dr. Jose Castro, one of the world's most knowledgeable shark experts. Dr. Castro is a fisheries biologist for National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), a senior scientist at the Mote Marine Lab in Florida, and a consultant to numerous foreign governments, such as South Africa and Mexico. Dr. Castro has been documenting shark behavior for over 30 years.—Hillary Vidars, Ph.D.



Skin Diver Magazine (SDM): What attracted you to the field of shark research?

Dr. Jose Castro (JC): I was disturbed by the fact that even trained experts knew so little about sharks. In the 1970s, I was working at a marine lab at a well-known college, studying the effect of pesticides on crabs. I saw that a number of scientists were grossly misidentifying

JC: Because most shark species cannot be kept in captivity and sharks are extremely difficult to study in the wild. We do not have the equipment to observe sharks over long distances and at great depths for long periods of time. Shark research and other marine studies are under-funded because they have not had the public support or

see if they return to the same nursery area to give birth year after year.

SDM: The reproduction processes of sharks are very interesting. For example, is it true that sharks have an unusually long gestation period?

JC: Yes. Sharks have the longest gestation periods of any animal on this planet.

Depending on the species, a shark's gestation period ranges from five months up to two years or longer.

SDM: Do sharks have specific mating and spawning seasons?

JC: Yes, and they vary depending on the species. Also, sharks only produce about a dozen offspring at a time, unlike other fish, such as tuna, which can spawn sometimes every day for a year and produce millions and millions of eggs. Another interesting fact is that a shark, which may live 20 or 30 years, may not reach its reproductive age until 10 years.

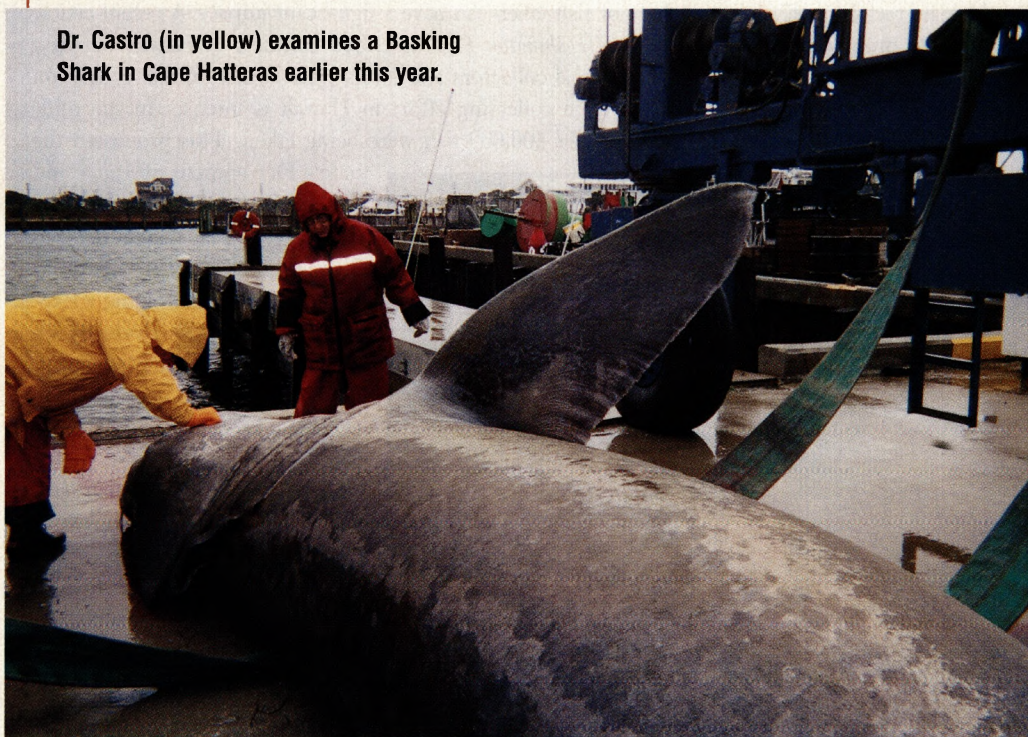
SDM: What else is unusual about sharks' birthing habits?

JC: Sharks give birth to live young and in one species, the Sand Tiger Shark, the young engage in inter-uterine cannibalism.

SDM: Do you mean that the first sharks hatched in the mother's uterus eat the other eggs?

JC: Yes. It's a survival mechanism, and the ultimate form of sibling rivalry!

Dr. Castro (in yellow) examines a Basking Shark in Cape Hatteras earlier this year.



shark species, such as mistaking a Lemon Shark for a Bull Shark.... Upon further investigation, I learned that some displays at the marine lab were misidentifying entire shark families. So I decided to write a guide to help the researchers get their sharks straight. My book was called *The Sharks of North America*, and amazingly enough, it is still in print and used today.

SDM: Why are there still so many things which we don't understand about sharks?

advertising campaign that other programs have, such as the U.S. space program. If we had the budget that the government allocates for just one space shuttle launch, we could increase our knowledge of the oceans enormously.

SDM: You are currently on loan to the Mote Marine Lab in Sarasota, FL. What kind of studies are you conducting there?

JC: I'm studying the biology and reproductive habits of sharks. One of my most interesting studies involves tagging Black Tip Sharks off South Carolina to

continued on page 76

RECENTLY I READ A NEWS REPORT DESCRIBING HOW reef fish are being laundered. It seemed absurd, but also sadly inevitable.

The report was prepared by the Environmental News Service and the Pacific International News Association (PINA), and related information gathered through the Pacific Ocean Sciences Fellowship, a program of PINA and SeaWeb that helps acquaint journalists with issues affecting marine ecology.

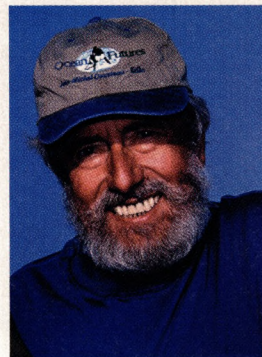
As the report explains, the mechanics of laundering are easy to understand. The reef-rich waters of Indonesia, the Philippines and other Pacific nations are increasingly being fished out, and as a result, they are coming under stricter controls. Importers in some places are more particular about where fish come from, so illegal, unregulated catches are laundered in less contentious places. It is not uncommon to find reef fish coming from countries, like Singapore, that have no reef fishing.

It sounds like a small, distant problem, but there are nuances that should concern people everywhere.

Reef fish are not only captured live for the restaurants of Hong Kong. Many species are also taken for

some profit for the retailer. For catching a fish that sells for \$250, the fisherman will get a dime.

And the reef? The effects of cyanide fishing are becoming more commonly known. In addition to indiscriminately killing fish and invertebrates, cyanide causes zooxanthellae, the algae that live in and sustain corals, to vacate their hosts—leading to coral bleaching.



Sleight-Of-Hand Threatens Reef Health

BY JEAN-MICHEL COUSTEAU

But the pressure on reefs isn't only chemical. The raw numbers of fish taken can have a significant impact. A recent article in the *Washington Post* described conflicts in Hawaii between ornamental collectors and locals who subsist on fish caught on reefs. The collecting effort in Hawaii is intense: In the mid-1990s, over 400,000 fish were being taken. This prompted the

state's Department of Land and Natural Resources to undertake a fish survey. The results showed that populations of popular aquarium fish were taking a sizeable hit: Longnose Butterflyfish were down by 54 percent; Achilles Tang by 63 percent.

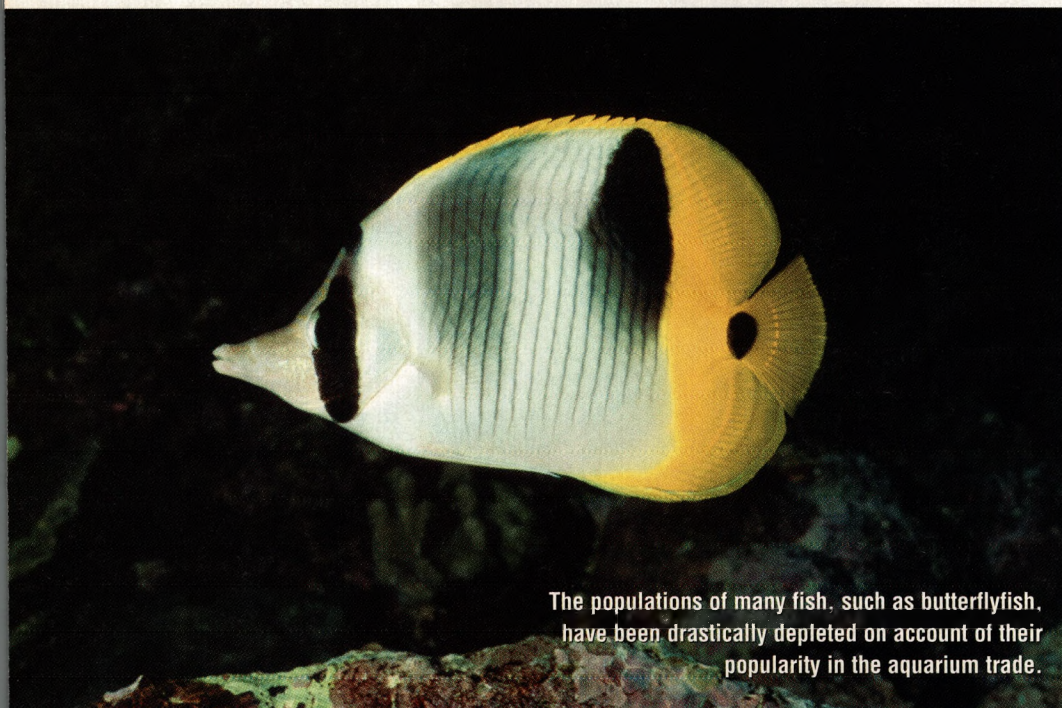
Now, it is often said that, compared to the effects of global warming, ornamental fish collecting is not a serious threat to reef health. But this does not take into account the nature of reef diversity. A study published earlier this year in the journal *Science* found that high diversity correlates with high rates of endemism. In other words, many species of reef fish live in only one location. If a great many fish are taken from one place—and this tends to be the pattern—an

entire species can be at risk of extinction.

In addition, if certain types of fish are removed from a reef, the reef loses services that are not so quickly assumed by other species. If herbivores vanish, for example, algae can quickly overwhelm corals.

Hawaii's answer was to establish Fish Replenishment Areas—a reserve in which collecting is prohibited. And according to resource managers, the fish populations in the reserves are recovering.

The aquarium fish industry, predictably, favors a more



The populations of many fish, such as butterflyfish, have been drastically depleted on account of their popularity in the aquarium trade.

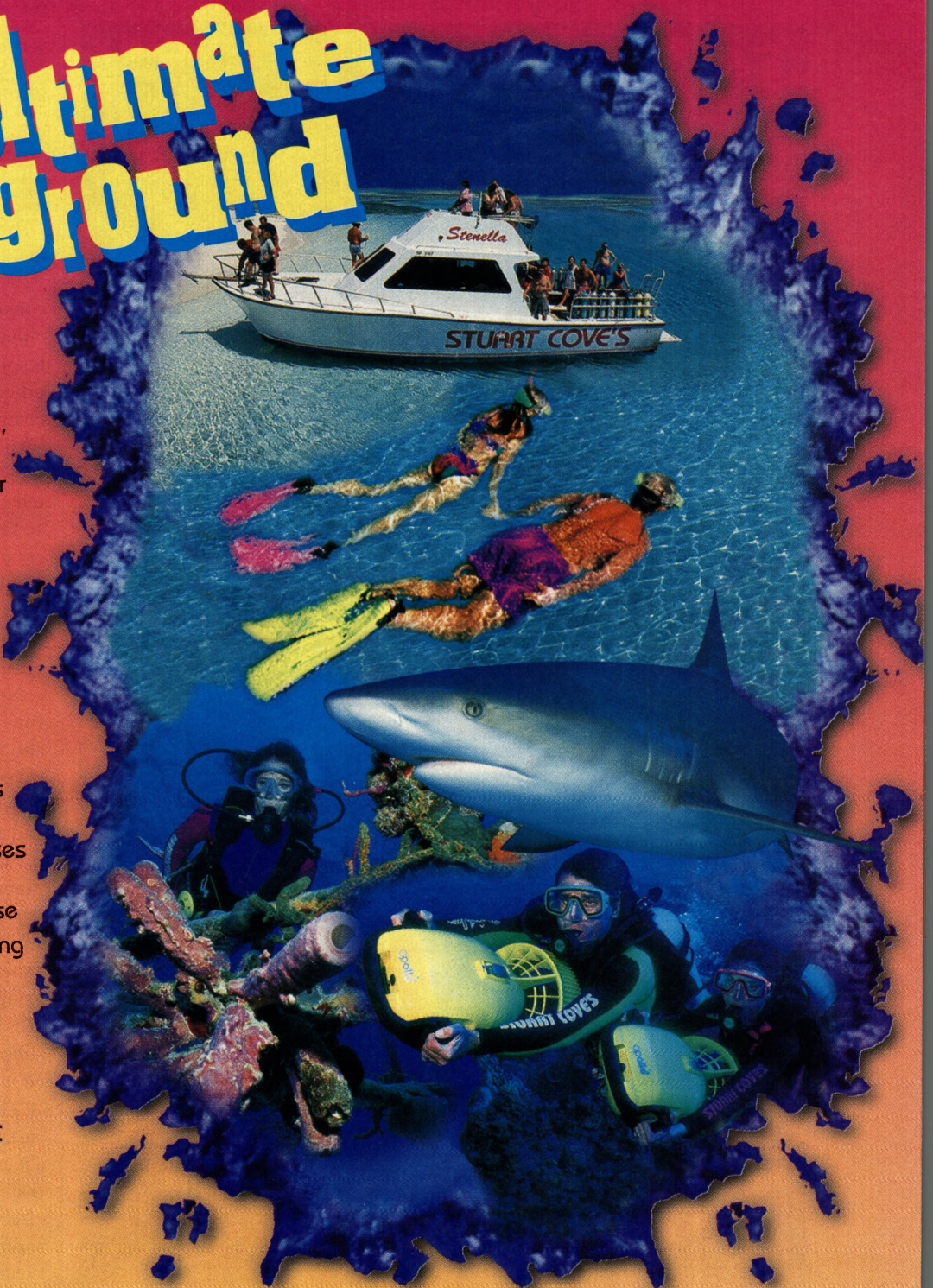
the aquarium trade, which is driven by a burgeoning demand in the United States and Europe. As one speaker told the Fellowship, since 1971 the number of ornamental fish species imported to the U.S. has risen from 200 to 1,038.

Many of these have been and still are captured by the use of sodium cyanide. Squirted into the creases and crevices of a reef, the cyanide quickly kills about half the fish who encounter it. The others are stunned, then collected. Half of these die on their way to market. The rest survive, more or less, to be sold in prosperous countries and to earn a hand-

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ENVIRONMENT

voluntary approach. Over the past several years, the industry has developed new standards for environmental responsibility. The Marine Aquarium Council, founded by the industry and World Wildlife Fund, has hammered out a certification. At the simplest level, like the "dolphin-safe" tuna logo, it will give consumers more information and a choice between those fish caught in a responsible way, and those caught in other ways. It also aims to establish a chain of accountability, "from reef to retail," by involving people at each stage in the process. It is too early to tell how effective this program is, but so far, exporters, importers and retailers in several key countries seem to be climbing aboard. There are reports, however, that uncertified collecting is occurring in new places, such as Kiribati and Vietnam.

Nonprofit organizations like the International Marinelife Alliance are also working hard to combat destructive collecting techniques. The IMA began educating fishermen back in the 1980s, and now helps communities deal with the larger economic problems of transitioning to better methods. By hammering home the message that dead reefs equal dead villages, educators teach fishermen how to fish without cyanide, using hand nets. So far, thousands of artisanal collectors, the villagers who subsist on this trade, have been educated in the Philippines and elsewhere.

These are all important steps toward sustainability. But the continuing stories about laundering in the Far East suggest that voluntary methods alone may not be effective enough. Governments must realize the benefit of reefs to their security and prosperity. Beyond their value as part of the global heritage, reefs are worth more healthy than plundered. Once governments become fully aware of this, they can begin to work more closely with nongovernmental organizations and one another. They can regulate this trade and ensure that it is sustainable. Or, if need be, they can restrict it, until those involved can demonstrate they are proceeding in a manner that preserves the integrity, vitality and majesty of the world's coral reefs. ➤

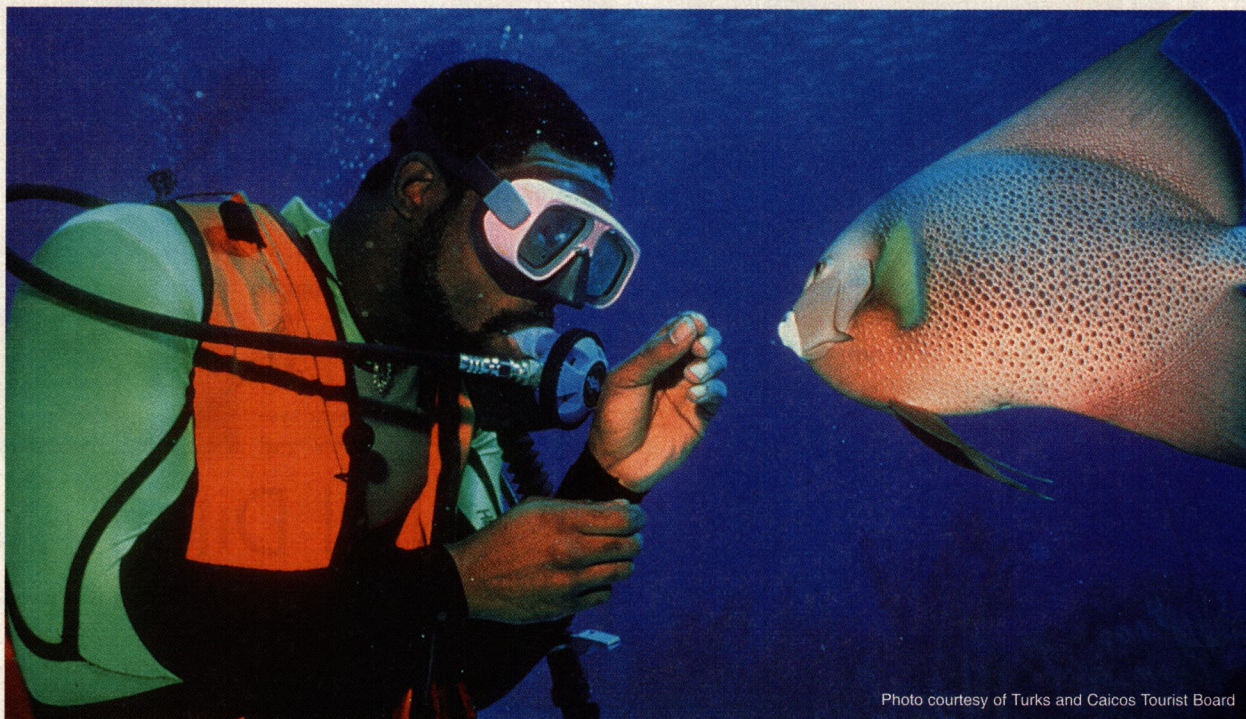



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I am considering making the jump to digital photography, but frankly, I am not sure why. I have a nice underwater camera system, but it uses film. My friends tell me "I have to go digital." What do you say? —Doug E., Irvine, CA

THESE DAYS, IF YOU ADMIT TO WANTING TO STICK with film, many underwater photographers look at you as if you have just appointed yourself as the official village idiot. I say nonsense! I am not against the digital revolution, nor do I believe that digital technology will soon fade, while film leads us into the future. But I do not think that now is the moment that every underwater photographer must make the digital leap or get left in the dust.

The digital revolution is a work in progress. Like a lot of technological advances, this revolution comes in stages and keeping current is not easy. Lack of product compatibility; frustration with computers, computer accessories and software; lack of product support after what can seem like a very short time to a buyer; and new products being considered old by the time the box gets opened are problems that confront everyone who enters the digital realm.

As a professional underwater photographer, I can justify the time, effort and money necessary to stay reasonably current in the ever-changing digital realm. But not everyone who reads my columns has the time or interest to do so. Nor do they want to buy a new camera system or add a computer and



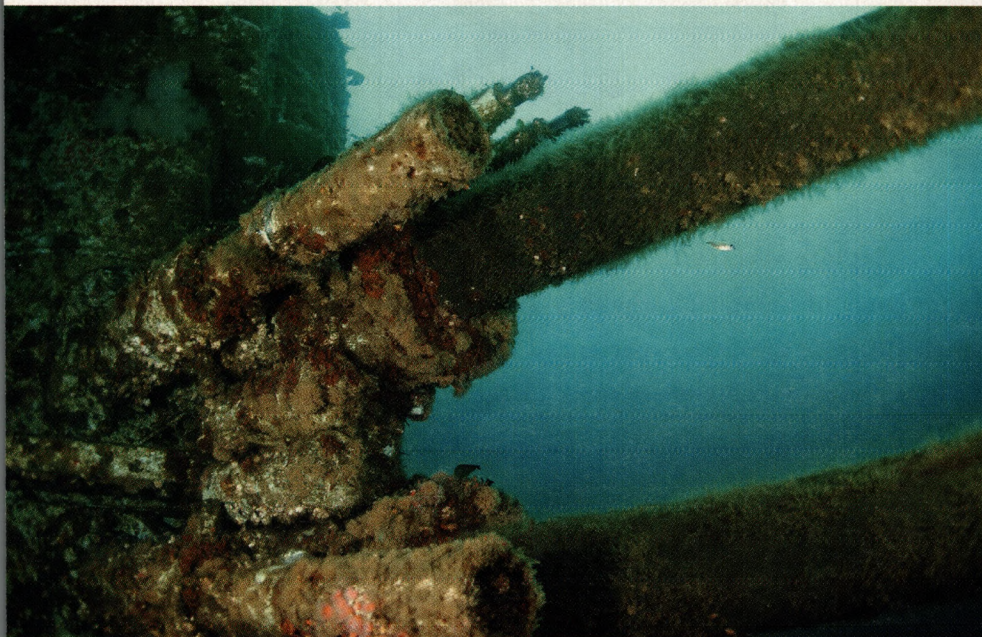
The Digital Dilemma

BY MARTY SNYDERMAN

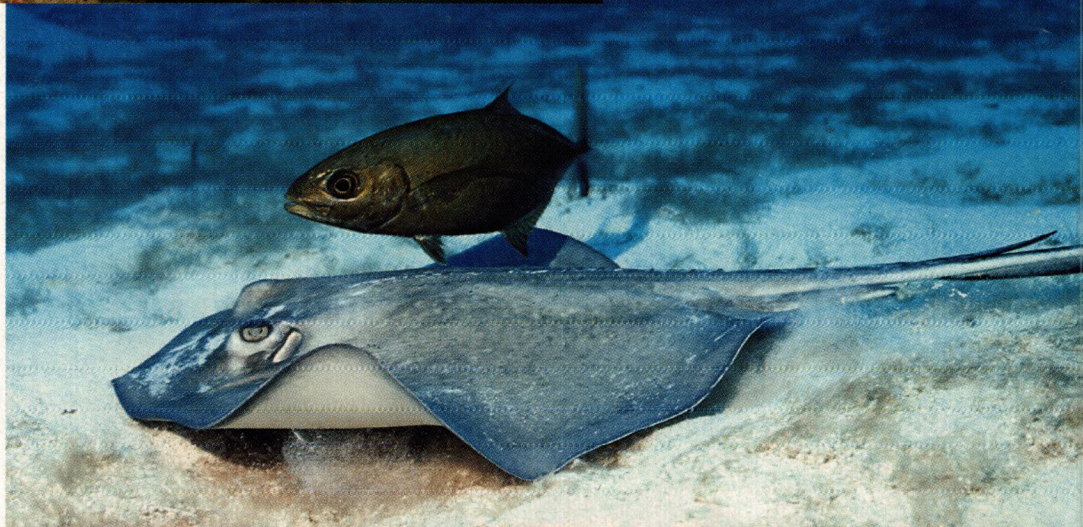
back-up technology to their travel package.

In recent months I have heard a number of my professional peers say things along the lines of, "Whether you shoot digital or film, either way you have to digitize your images and process them with Photoshop." While those comments make sense to a lot of professional shooters, what about regular folks that already have a life and too much to do? What about divers that only have the opportunity to enjoy underwater photography two, three or four times a year? To enjoy and share their work today, do they really have to scan or digitize and manipulate their images? Is it really in their best interest to toss their old film camera systems and invest in equipment and technology that will be outdated before they use their gear 10 times?

What about people who simply don't like to spend time on computers? Is it



**Above: Digital.
Right: Film.**
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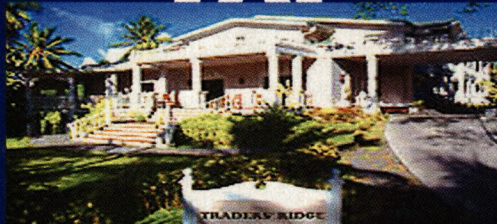
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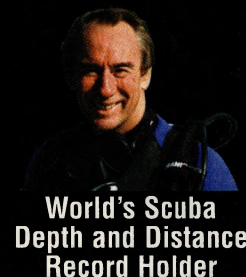
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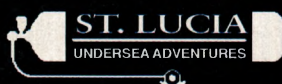
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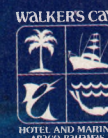
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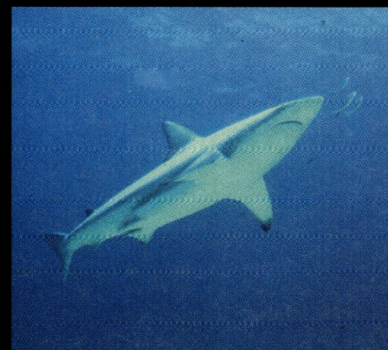
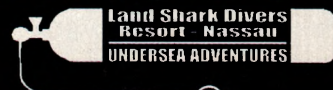
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necessary that they learn to like it? What about you? Clearly, these are the most important questions.

Recently, Michael Purcell, the Sales and Marketing Manager at Sea & Sea Photography USA, assured me that in the foreseeable future his company will continue to market both film and digital camera products. So will Ikelite and many other manufacturers. One of the advantages of the film world that Michael and I discussed is as follows:

Let's assume that you go on a dive trip and shoot 20 rolls of film. If no processing is done on location, when you get home you can drop your film off at a lab, take a nap, swing back by the lab a couple of hours later and all of your film is processed and ready to be edited. Easy.

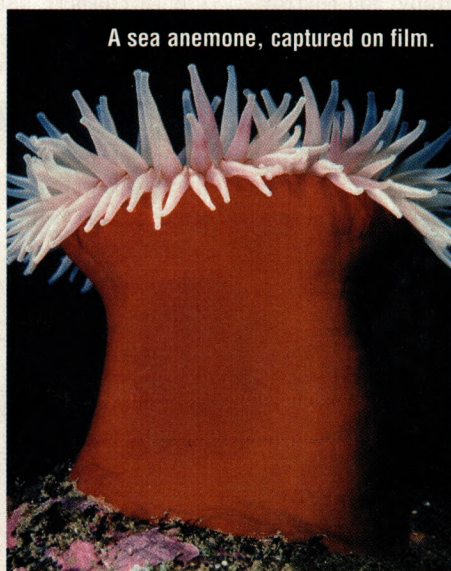
If you decide to [use] Photoshop...you have committed a significant amount of your time. In addition, managing a digital library requires some software, computer memory and computer know-how.

If you shot the same number of digital images (you will probably shoot more) you would need to edit your images just as you would if you had shot film, but the process will probably be orders of magnitude slower. To edit, digital files must be reviewed on the camera's preview monitor, or Liquid Crystal Diode (LCD) screen, or downloaded to a computer, then opened up. This takes time. Editing digital thumbnails is often trickier and more tedious than editing 4 x 6 inch prints or 35 mm slides with a loupe. If you choose to edit opened files

instead of thumbnails, the editing process takes even longer.

Once edited, the real work begins. If you decide to optimize your edited images with Photoshop or some other image manipulation software, you have committed a significant amount of your time. In addition, managing a digital library requires some software, computer memory and computer know-how. Are you the kind of person that will do better using slide pages, a shoe box or a filing cabinet?

Suppose you can find your digital images on your computer. How will you share them? Some people will instantly say Power Point presentations or e-mail. Those are wonderful



A sea anemone, captured on film.

answers for some, but not everyone has an expensive LCD projector and the required software or e-mail.

If you like technology and find it to be more fascinating than frustrating, then maybe now is the time for you to go digital. In three, five or maybe 10 years, perhaps my answer to Doug will be, "Absolutely. Go digital." But, as of now, you really don't have to enter the evolving world of digital photography to be a darn good underwater photographer. 🐟

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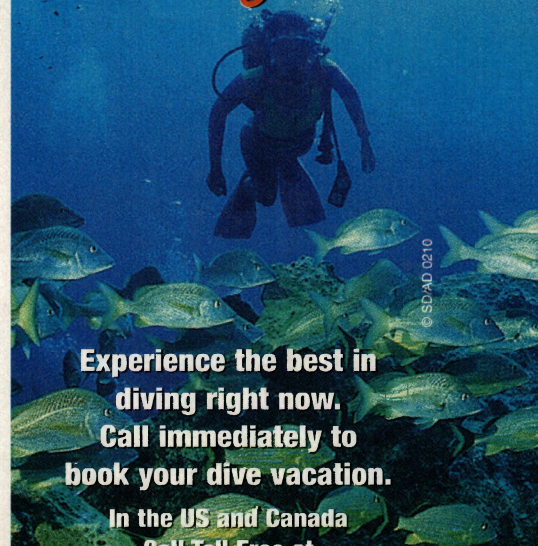
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DOTTYBACKS ARE BEAUTIFULLY COLORED AND often sexually dimorphic—the sexes look different. Even so, many are overlooked by divers because they are small and generally hide in caves, under ledges or among bits of rubble. They are wary of intruders and duck into safety as soon as they notice one.

The female Lyretail Dottyback is gray with a yellow tail, while the male has a bright orange head. They prepare a little cave and vigorously defend it against intruders. The female often remains inside, while the male runs off unwanted visitors; this includes curious divers, making it hard to capture them together on film.

So here I am sitting in a rubble patch at 100 feet, waiting patiently for a brilliant yellow jawfish to poke its head out of a burrow for a photo. With bottom time dwindling, the jawfish shows no sign of emerging. From the corner of my eye, I glimpse a male Dottyback. The female should be nearby, and I'm thinking I can get the pair together while I'm waiting on the jawfish.

Slowly I shift my position, avoiding eye contact with the

Dottyback. Too late! The male notices and ducks into his cave. Back to the jawfish—still nothing. A sidelong glance reveals the Dottyback in the cave entrance. I move a bit. He's still there. Another move and he races out of the cave over my shoulder, but quickly returns. Time to check for the jaw-

Jawlocking Lyretail Dottybacks: *Pseudochromis steenei*

BY DENISE NIELSEN TACKETT AND LARRY TACKETT

fish, but still nothing. I move to get a better angle on the Dottyback and pre-focus on the cave entrance. I wait.

Out of nowhere, a second male Dottyback appears. The two males display, each trying to make the other stand down. Suddenly, they lock jaws. I click the shutter. The grip is enough

WHERE TO FIND IT

The Lyretail Dottyback is found in parts of Indonesia

to drive the second male away, just as my computer starts beeping—I'm out of bottom time. 🐟



Caught in the act—the rarely seen Dottybacks.



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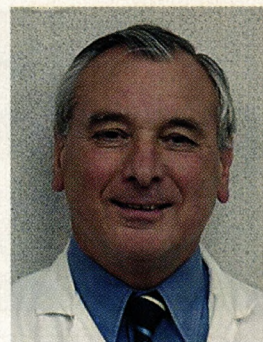
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DIVING IS ONE OF THE FEW SPORTS THAT REQUIRES an education in physics, physiology and medicine as part of the qualifications for certification. These requirements have been accepted for many years, and stem from the fact that diving places unique stresses on the body and requires underwater life support systems that must be learned and understood. Because there is so much medicine involved with diving, the scientific community supports a continuing research effort to understand the related medical problems. Each year there are a number of meetings where diving physicians and scientists gather to report new findings and update knowledge on diving medicine and physiology.

One such meeting is the annual meeting of the Undersea and Hyperbaric Medical Society, an organization that represents div-

swimming. The upward swimming posture is often observed in divers who are over weighted. By swimming in a 10-degree head-up position, your swimming capacity would be reduced by about 12 percent; and with a 20-degree head-up position, swimming capacity would



This finding indicates that divers over the age of 40 should have a careful medical evaluation to be sure they can withstand the exercise stress related to diving.



be reduced by 22 percent. If you add a camera or other equipment, another loss of 20 percent in capacity will be encountered.

Heart Risks

Another concept brought out in the UHMS meeting came from the Divers Alert Network (DAN), which reported on 130 heart-related diving deaths among 877 total fatalities recorded between 1990 and 1999. In the 20- to 40-year-old range, the number of cardiac fatalities was low (about three percent), but the incidence rose after age 40. In the group from 50 to 79, over 1/3 of fatalities were caused by heart problems. This finding indicates that divers over the age of 40 should have a careful medical evaluation to be sure they can withstand the exercise stress related to diving.

An efficient means of screening healthy divers for heart problems is by analysis of risk factors for heart disease (cigarette smoking, elevated blood lipids, hypertension, diabetes, family history of premature heart attacks),

Reduce Your Diving Risks

ing physicians and scientists throughout the world. At their annual meeting of 2001, some important concepts were presented that are worthy of comment, as they influence all aspects of diving, including sport diving.

Swimming Efficiency

I was taught by experts in underwater kinesiology that there was a certain degree of drag from equipment, and this produced the energy demands experienced when swimming underwater.

A group of diving scientists examined the affect of body position on drag (the resistance to motion caused by the water). They looked at drag when swimming horizontally, and when a diver tilts upward when

and if risk is increased, continue the evaluation with an exercise stress test. In the test, you should be able to reach a maximum level of 13 METs (a measure of exercise tolerance). Peak exercise capacity of 13 Mets will allow a diver to swim comfortably at a speed of about one knot, and will provide the reserve needed for safe diving.

Minimizing energy needs while diving and reducing heart attack risk are two important goals for every diver, but particularly for those beyond 40 years of age.

You can find more information on diving medicine at www.scubamed.com. 🐟



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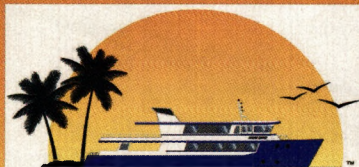
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SOONER OR LATER IT WAS BOUND TO happen, what with all the gender squabbles going on in today's world. *Lloyd's List*, the daily newspaper of maritime insurance, announced that from now on, in line with the times, a ship will be an "it." A ship has been a she—by maritime tradition—for hundreds of years, yet gender in language has always been debatable. Remember English 101—masculine or feminine and sometimes neuter? Let's lobby *Lloyd's List* for an amendment: If a vessel is named after a woman, such as the *Mary Celeste*, we'll call it a she. If named for a man, such as the *President Coolidge*, we'll call it a he. Any others, such as the *Central America*, could be an it.

I always preferred "she" for a ship, so I guess I'll just have to find solace in William Shakespeare's comforting words: "What's in a name? That which we call a rose, by any other name would smell as sweet."

MARY LARSON OF BALTIMORE, MD, LOVES clipper ships and marvels at a dramatic picture she saw of four sailors high up in the rigging of a vessel that was sailing in a fierce storm. She asks for the name and deposition of the ship.

This was the *Garthsnaid* of William Garthwaite's Marine Navigation Company. Sailing under the flag of the Canadian

Merchant Service, the windjammer was one of the finest in the fleet at the turn of the century. Carrying a general cargo, the *Garthsnaid* sailed throughout the world, from the British Isles to Africa, South America and Australia. In 1923, after 31 years of service, the sleek ship was damaged so badly, it was taken out of service in Melbourne, Australia, and scrapped in 1940. (See *Windjammers of the Horn: The Story of the Last British Fleet of Square-Rigger Sailing Ships* by A.G. Course).

NEW ENGLAND DIVER DAVE CLANCY, VIA THE internet, says readers may want to check Maptech's Mapserver at <http://maptech.com>. Although the site is designed to sell

The Garthsnaid

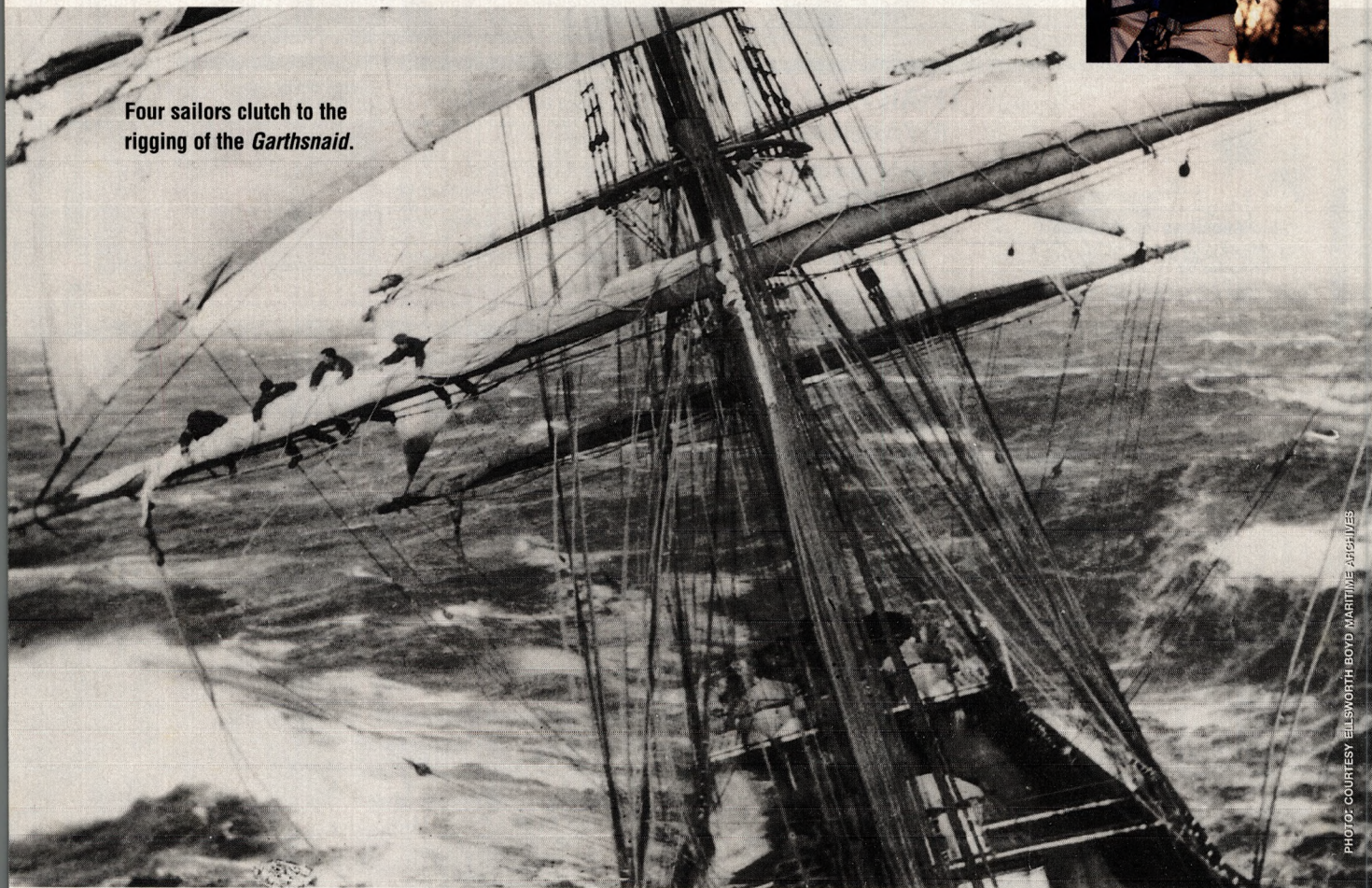
BY ELLSWORTH BOYD

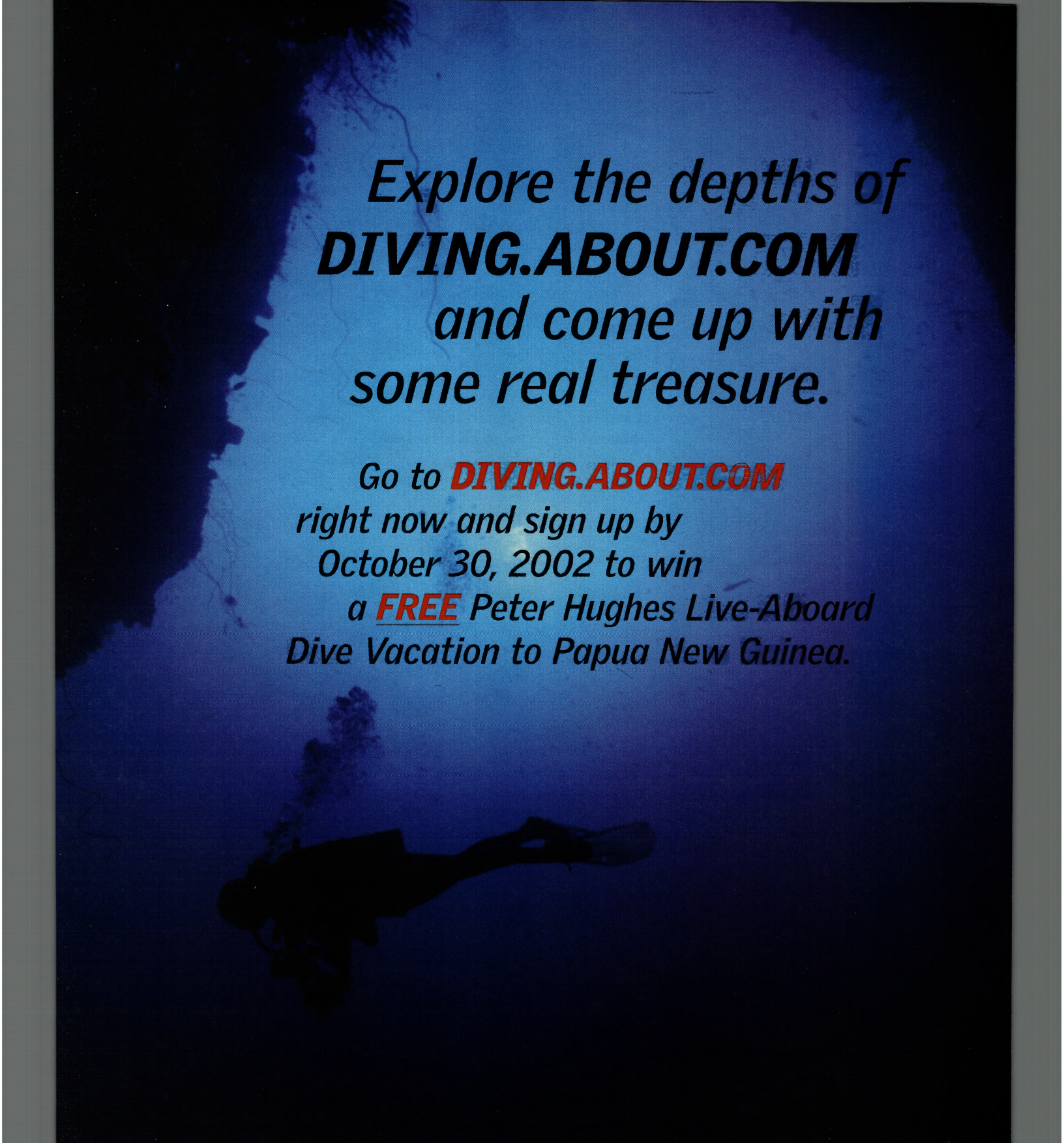
Maptech's digital chart kits, it also provides free topo maps and nautical charts of U.S. coastal waters and the Great Lakes. It's geo-referenced, meaning if you place your mouse arrow anywhere on a map or chart, the latitude and longitude coordinates for that point appear at the bottom of the screen.

JACK JENSEN OF BIG PINE Key, FL, explored several wrecks while vacationing in Barbados and asks for a good resource book that might give details about the vessels and when they sank.



Four sailors clutch to the rigging of the *Garthsnaid*.





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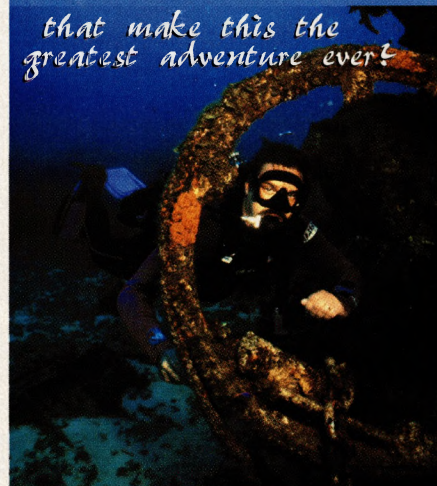
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WRECKFACTS

Martha Watkins Gilkes, in her book *Diving Guide to the Eastern Caribbean*, devotes 10 pages to the shipwrecks of Barbados. She has a detailed map and photos of the best wrecks the island has to offer, including the popular SS *Stravronikita*.

LAUREL PURDUE, VIA THE

Internet, asks, "Is there a connection between the *Titanic* and the *Empress of Ireland*, sunk in the Gulf of St. Lawrence?"

Cris Kohl of West Chicago, IL, says there's an interesting correlation between the two that involves fireman William Clarke, who survived both tragedies. Interviewed many times throughout the years, Clarke always gave the same analysis. He said the *Titanic*—with a loss of 1,500 lives, "went down

Owned by William Wrigley, Jr., founder of the chewing gum company bearing his name, the ferry was retired in 1951 and converted to a salvage barge in 1960. It sank that same year, while attempting to salvage the *Dominator*, a Greek freighter that ran aground off Rocky Point, Palos Verdes. The *Avalon's* stern remains, but most of its superstructure is scattered across the bottom. A cabin and crane lies on the port side, where Bluefin Tuna, bonito and barracuda are often sighted. The wreck is a good lobster spot in season.

WALLY LARRABEE OF SALT LAKE

City, UT, writes that his daughter Beccie is doing a report in school about the USS *Monitor* and the *Merrimac* (CSS *Virginia*), and their famous Civil War battle. Beccie asks when *Monitor*

...the *Titanic*—with a loss of 1,500 lives, "went down like a baby going to sleep," while the *Empress of Ireland*—with a loss of 1,000 passengers and crew—"rolled over like a hog in a ditch."



like a baby going to sleep," while the *Empress of Ireland*—with a loss of 1,000 passengers and crew—"rolled over like a hog in a ditch." It took the "unsinkable" White Star Liner almost three hours to sink after it struck the iceberg. The *Empress* disappeared in 14 minutes, after colliding with the collier *Storstad* below Quebec City.

SHARON FOSTER OF VENTURA,

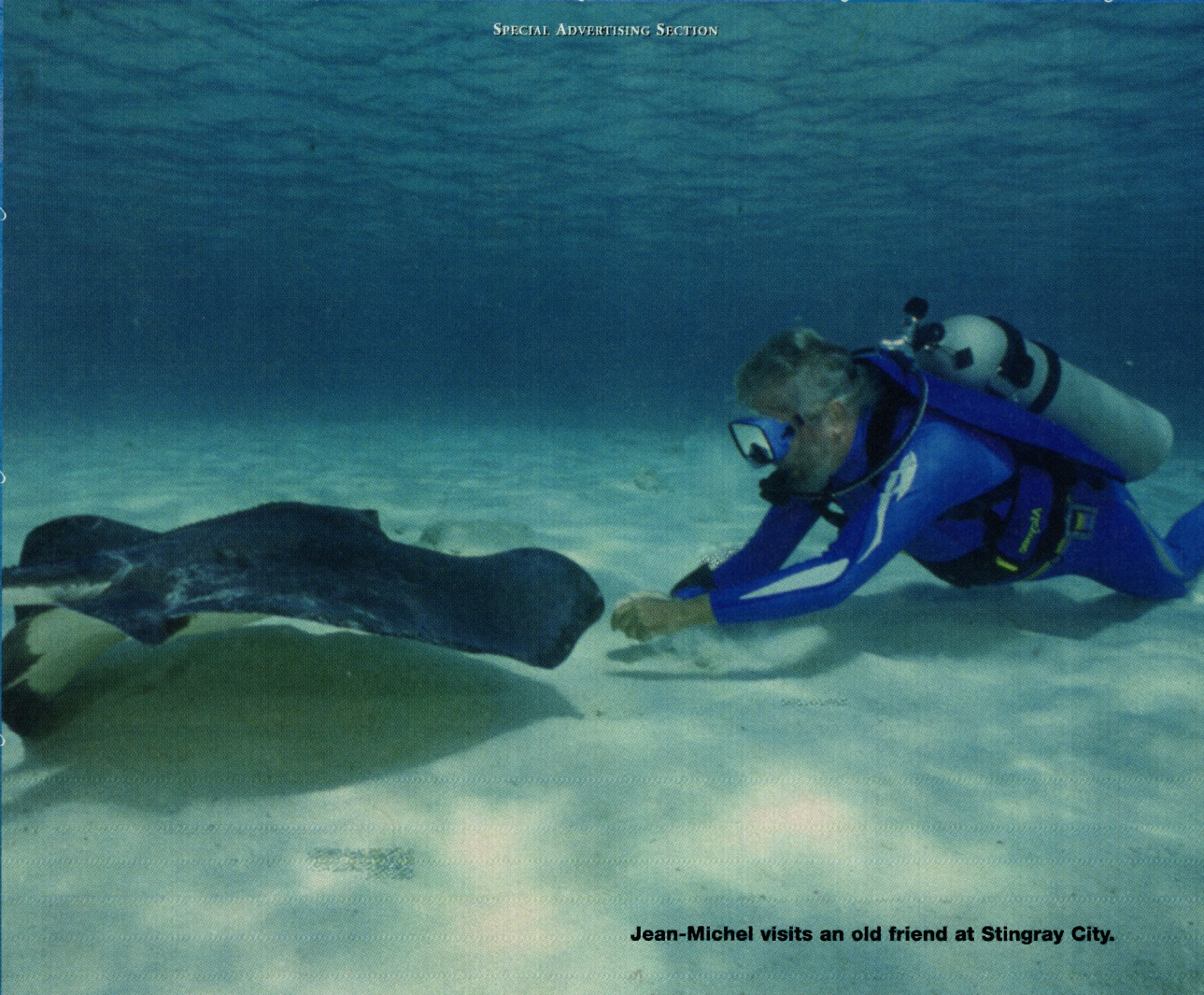
CA, wants the latitude/longitude coordinates for the *Avalon*, sunk off Palos Verdes, CA.

Located about one mile off Palos Verdes Point, the remains can be found at 33 47.382°N, 118 25.665°W. It's fitting to ask for the location, since the wreck lies between ridges that run parallel to shore and can be difficult to find. The *Avalon*, a triple-deck, twin screw vessel built in 1891, was one of two Catalina Island passenger ferries dubbed the Great White Steamers.

was discovered and if there are any good books and websites on it.

Discovered off Cape Hatteras, NC, August 27, 1973, by scientists aboard the research vessel *Eastward*, the *Monitor* lies in 230 feet of water south-southeast of Cape Hatteras Light. It achieved National Marine Sanctuary status by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on January 30, 1975. Two books offer a wealth of information: *Ships of the World* by Lincoln Paine, and *USS Monitor: The Ship That Launched a Modern Navy* by Ed Miller. Go to the USS *Monitor* website for more details.

Send your wreck questions to Ellsworth Boyd, 1120 Bernoudy Rd., White Hall, MD 21161. Be sure to include a stamped, self-addressed envelope for a personal reply. Ellsworth can also be e-mailed at ellsboyd@aol.com. 🐟



Jean-Michel visits an old friend at Stingray City.

Jean-Michel Cousteau's Cayman Islands

I have been honored to serve as an environmental spokesperson for the Cayman Islands for the past three years. Like many Caribbean island nations, the Cayman Islands has a great wealth of undersea attractions, and an equally challenging task of hosting more than 300,000 guests each year. Where the Cayman Islands excels is in the country's ability to provide visitors with a memorable experience with minimum compromise of the natural heritage that has made them one of the top travel destinations in the region.

Here one never feels rushed or crowded. And the underwater wonders always seem intimate, vibrant, pristine. The government and the citizens of the Cayman Islands have worked hard to maintain their ocean environment, balancing often-divergent needs in the spirit of mutual respect, and genuine concern for the islands' long-term quality of life. The result is a wonderland for recreational divers and snorkellers of all skill levels. If I had to sum up the Cayman experience in one word, it would be "friendly." Not only are the hosts welcoming, but the sea itself seems to teem with individual marine "personalities" ready to greet the diver.

Molly the Manta, Spot the Dolphin, and Ben & Jerry are best known of these



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CIRCLE # 95 ON READERS SERVICE CARD

CAYMAN ISLANDS
Grand Cayman • Cayman Brac • Little Cayman

virtual supermodels of the dive world. Like international celebrities, their pictures grace countless dive magazines, and like old friends, their images are at home in many more private photo collections. Today, a new batch of stars has emerged, Darth Vader, Stumpy, and Big Mama at Stingray City and Kinky the Eagle Ray in Little Cayman.

Stingray City is another very special place, where divers and snorkellers come from around the world to dive or snorkel with elusive and playful rays. There is also the Sandbar, not far off, where the water is less than 6 feet deep, making the interaction with these graceful creatures even more accessible for adults and tiny tots alike. Stingray City is not only a place to encounter one of the world's most ancient and unusual creatures up-close, it is also a splendid example of the Cayman approach to the environment. While rays around the world are hunted for food, bringing perhaps \$30 per animal at some international fish markets, Caymanians understand that a live ray is worth over \$50,000 per year in tourist revenue, a bounty enjoyed by the entire island.

For those desiring a more spiritual experience, Tarpon Alley is a truly magical location. When the sun reflects off the silver scales of large schools of tarpon, time seems to stand still, and the ocean becomes transformed into a realm of light.

If these sites already sound a little too familiar, there are others that aren't even named. On the East End of Grand Cayman, far from airports and the Seven Mile Beach strip,

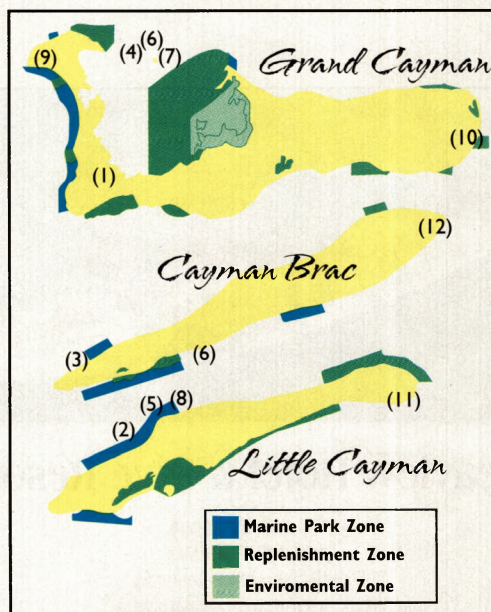
lie dozens of coves and reefs, isolated and pristine, still waiting to be explored.

Away from the main island, Little Cayman and Cayman Brac offer wonderful opportunities for divers wishing to explore. Bloody Bay Wall in Little Cayman is one of the premium dive sites in all the Caribbean, and a personal

A French Angelfish shares a wreck with a visiting diver.



Cousteau prepares to kick off into the Cayman Islands' turquoise waters.



A few of Jean-Michel Cousteau's favorite things: (1) The convenience of Owen Roberts International Airport. (2) Bloody Bay Marine Park. (3) The Keith Tibbetts. (4) Stingray City. (5) Little Cayman walls. (6) Diving with Tarpon. (7)/(8) Diving with Eagle Rays. (9) The Turtle Farm. (10) Grand Cayman's East End. (11) The beaches of Little Cayman. (12) The bluffs of Cayman Brac.



Our divers will tell you why Treasure Island Divers instructors and crew are the best on the island. You choose the spot. We dive all four sides of the island--North, South, East and West! Unlimited dive packages year-round, great boats, great staff--and giving you the best service is what we're all about!

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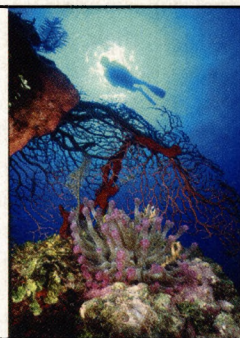


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e-mail: fish@candw.ky website: www.otwdivers.com

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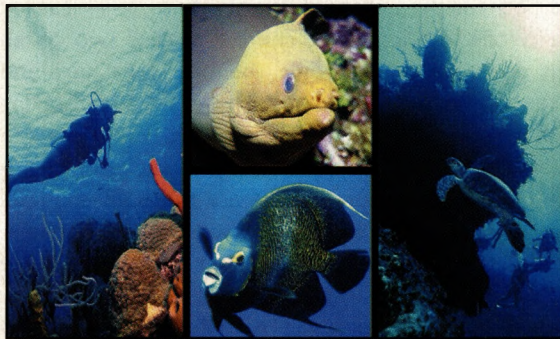
Morritt's Tortuga Club & Resort and Tortuga Divers

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Experience Grand Cayman's most spectacular diving while vacationing at the island's premier resort located at East End. With the dive shop right on site, along with windsurf equipment, two pools, tennis court and David's Restaurant, you may never leave the resort! Four night package includes: Accommodations in a one-bedroom unit with fully equipped kitchen; daily two-tank dive (3 days); sunset cruise; Tortuga Divers T-Shirt; 20% off a Nitrox Course; 20% off a waverunner ride. Prices from \$599.00 pp/double occupancy (taxes incl.)

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CAYMAN ISLANDS
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CAYMAN DIVING SCHOOL

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E-mail: skindiver@caymandivingschool.com

Web: www.caymandivingschool.com

It's our 15th birthday and we have lots of fun planned for 2002! Cayman Diving School specializes in teaching - from introductory diving courses to instructor, recreational or technical — we even have our own course director. Visit our brand new dive shop on 7 Mile Beach and let our dive staff show you the dive of your life! Check out our web site for monthly specials.

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Conveniently located in George Town harbor, we depart for daily 2-Tank and 1-Tank dives. This location is great for instruction and has an excellent shore dive on the wreck of the Call (see photo). Our boats at our private dock in Snug Harbor take you directly to the North Wall and Sting Ray City. Complimentary dive shuttle from your hotel/condo! We are the in-house dive operator at the Comfort Suites, 7 Mile Beach, let us create the ideal dive package for you!

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Grand Cayman • Cayman Brac • Little Cayman



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Web: www.edenrockdive.com

We offer the best-valued diving package in the Cayman Islands. Combining small group diving on a big boat with the very best unlimited shore diving package. Eden Rock Diving Centre is ideally situated a short swim from Eden Rock's and Devil's Grotto. Both outstanding reef systems are great for all levels of diving experience. Our friendly and professional staffs of instructors will ensure that you have a great vacation.

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You'll feel right at home at the Holiday Inn Hotel Grand Cayman! Our full-service hotel is located directly across from famous Seven Mile Beach. From luxurious lodging, to dining in our restaurant or beachside cafe, or just lounging on the beach - we make vacationing simple and carefree. For our divers and adventure seekers, our in-house water sports concierge, Red Sail Sports, can book all the activities Cayman has to offer.

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Call today to book your complete dive vacation.

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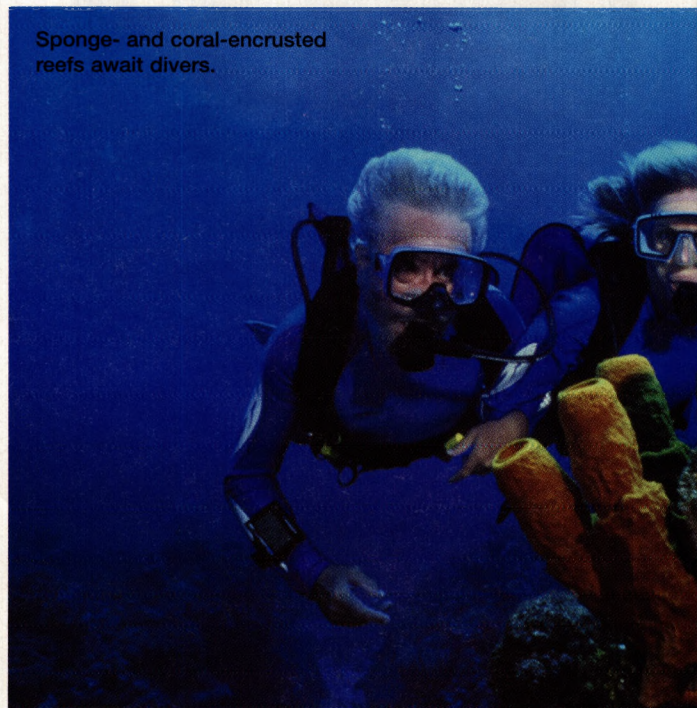
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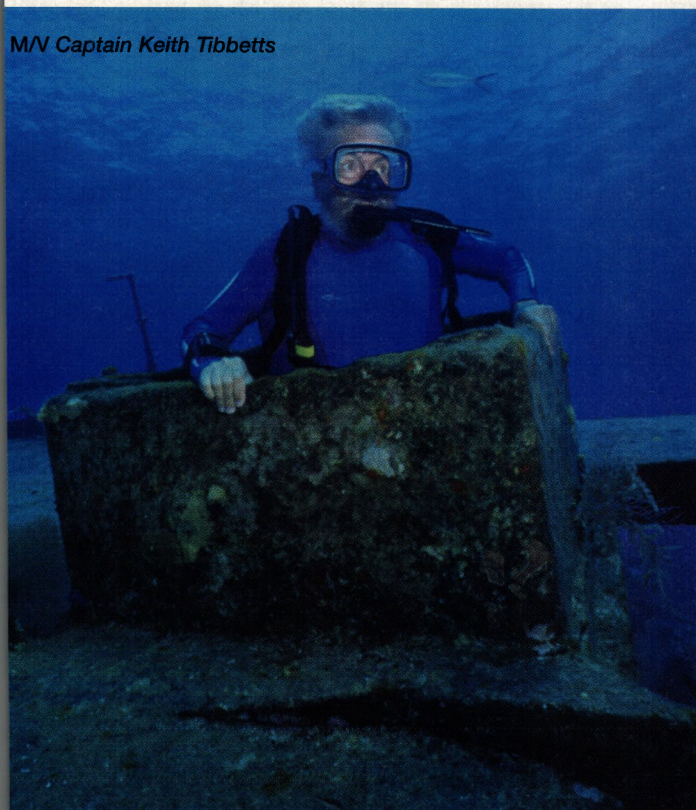
CAYMAN ISLANDS
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favorite, both for the variety of its attractions, as well as for the quality of its environment. There are some two dozen different dives, so a diver could spend a week here and never see the same place twice. There are breathtaking drop-offs and awe-inspiring caves, through which one can pass safely. The waters are rich with many species of friendly marine life. And of course, there are the giant sponges. Some of them appear black until touched by a dive light, when they turn a deep bloody red. And on the South side of Little Cayman in areas less dived there are equally fascinating dive sites, including the wreck of an old cargo freighter, the Soto Trader. Sites include coral gardens, caves and caverns and sandy chutes that lead out to the wall.

In the waters off Cayman Brac lies the only Soviet shipwreck in the Western Hemisphere—a “destroyer” sunk intentionally in 1996 to serve as an artificial reef. The MV *Captain Keith Tibbetts* is an Eco-diving success story. It is an important draw for dive tourists, brings income to Cayman Brac, and relieves pressure on more sensitive dive sites elsewhere in Cayman, ensuring their long-term health and profitability. The site also has an important emotional connection for me, as I had the unforgettable experience of “going down with the ship” during the filming of “Destroyer at Peace,” a documentary about this unique venture. Riding the vessel into the deep was a profound and moving experience that few if any captains have had the opportunity to describe. But it is nearly matched by the thrill of diving this mysterious and compelling wreck. The ship has broken up, forming strange and spectacular

Sponge- and coral-encrusted reefs await divers.





M/V Captain Keith Tibbetts

shapes on the sandy shelf and below. Fish have colonized the structures, and become personalities in their own right—a territorial grouper and a crooked-jawed Moray eel nicknamed Norman. There is something for everyone—amateurs can explore the midships and superstructure at 45 feet, while all advanced divers can descend 90 feet to the bow, with its impressive anchors and Soviet-era insignias. Snorkellers can enjoy the urchin-encrusted radar tower, which is especially intriguing at night, when the smaller creatures of the reef come to life.

The Cayman Islands is truly a diver's paradise. Popular, yet personal. Famous, yet friendly. In these waters, so clear and so clean, there is always something new to discover.



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Old (and Young) Broads Unite for Fun

ONE OF OUR READERS RECENTLY wrote in about his encounter with the founder of a dive club called OBDC. The founder was 63 years old and she boasted that OBDC had members nationwide. But the most interesting part of the letter was what this gentleman reader claimed OBDC is short for—"Old Broads Dive Club." Being a "broad" myself, I was moved to do a little research and discovered that the dive club is located in Southern California, and recently went on dive trips to the Cayman Islands, Netherlands Antilles and Micronesia. The homepage boasts several underwater images with links to a great newsletter, FAQs about the club, upcoming trips and events and a secret "members only" page. *Very James Bond.*

Yet, the question still remained, *What does OBDC stand for?* According to the website, the answer is, "Officially nothing. Unofficially men over 25 think that OBDC stands for 'Only Babes Dive Club.' Men under 25 think that OBDC stands for 'Old Broads Dive Club'. We like 'Outrageous Beauties Dive Club'." (Don't worry, guys, you can join the fun if you're accompanied by a member.) *For more information, whether you're an "Old Broad" or "Outrageous Beauty," visit www.obdc.org.*

Hammerheads Get Planning

FOR ALL THOSE Hammerheads out there who find themselves with a lot of time on their hands, a suggestion is this: Don't wait until the last minute to start planning your dive trips for next year. And remember: You don't need a meeting to hang out with fellow divers.

To learn more about the Hammerheads or join a chapter, call (858) 616-6408, or contact cfuller@dema.org.

Are You Looking for a Dive Club?

EVERY MONTH WE TALK ABOUT A lot of fantastic dive clubs. We tell

you what they do, where they're going and all the fun they are having. You may wonder why we torture with you with such facts, while you sit at home dreaming of having friends with whom you can travel or share dive stories, or perhaps just have a place to go and hang out every Tuesday night.

Well, here's your chance to find a dive club to join, so you can hook up with like-minded, fun-seeking divers who will greet you with open ears and

dive logs to compare. At Diveguide.com you too can link to all kinds of dive clubs. It also has links to accommodations in your favorite dive spots, and an equipment store link so you can't get all your gear ready for your next dive trip. Check it out and be part of a dive club, instead of just reading about them.

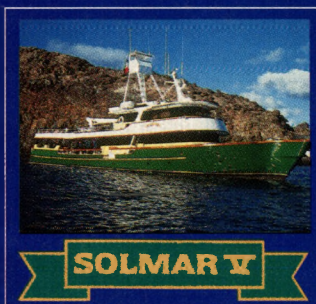
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DIVECLUBNEWS
BY MICHELLE DANNER

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BY JIM WALKER



Breitling Avenger Seawolf

Whether you're a recreational or commercial diver, you'll never out-dive the Avenger Seawolf watch. Featuring a case made of lightweight, non-corrodible titanium, the Avenger Seawolf is water-resistant to an impressive 10,000 feet. And, for commercial divers who reach extreme pressures in helium atmospheres, the Avenger has the added feature of a safety valve that automatically evacuates helium build-up during ascent. The high frequency, self-winding, 25 jewel movement is chronometer certified for accuracy. Features include a calendar display, a sapphire crystal that is glare-proofed on both sides, a unidirectional rotating bezel and screw-locked crown. It's available with either a rubber strap or titanium bracelet. 🐟

Breitling USA: (203) 762-1180; www.breitling.com

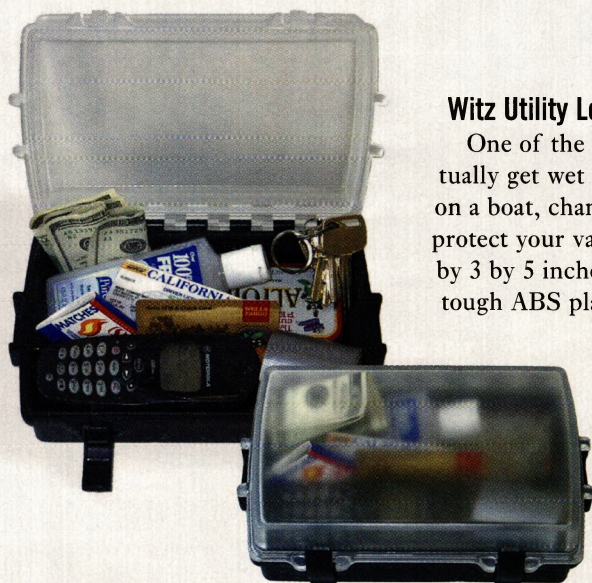
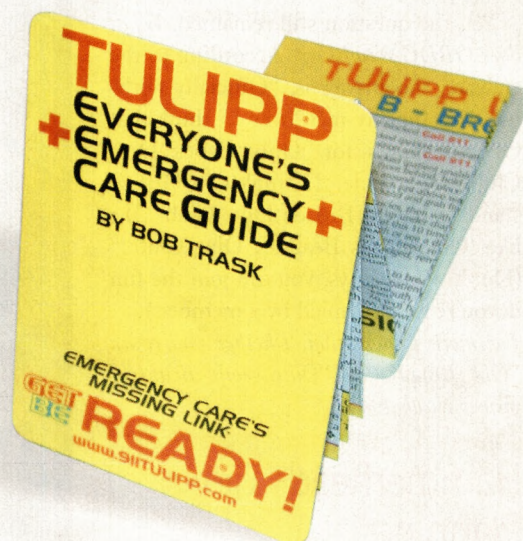
TULIPP: Everyone's Emergency Care Guide

A medical emergency can be hectic, confusing and frightening. And when medical professionals are unavailable, the average person must take charge of such an emergency and act correctly and quickly.

Whether on land or sea, when a situation requires emergency care, the TULIPP Guide can be a life-saving resource. The pocket-sized fold-out opens to a 13.75 by 31.25 inch, two-sided panel of vital care steps for emergencies such as bleeding, poisoning, shock and breathing problems. TULIPP stands for

Think, Urgent, Lying Down, Inspect, Plan and Proceed, and the guide's easy-to-follow layout incorporates these important steps to enable the user to quickly and calmly size-up an emergency, then take the most important actions first. 🐟

Stillwater Press: (760) 451-1800; www.911tulipp.com



Witz Utility Locker Sport Case

One of the "givens" of life on a dive boat is that everything will eventually get wet or be stepped on. And, if something spends enough time on a boat, chances are it will go overboard, too. The Utility Locker can protect your valuable gear from all of the above. Available in two sizes (8 by 3 by 5 inches or 10 by 5 by 7 inches), the Utility Locker is made of tough ABS plastic. When its two latches are closed, the lid seals to keep water out of the case, which protects the contents from drips and splashes on deck. The watertight seal also allows the Utility Locker to float with most contents; if it goes overboard, you can get it back, with your valuables safe and dry. And, to prevent the "overboard," two built-in tie loops allow the case to be secured in a safe place. 🐟

Witz Sport Cases: (800) 499-1568; www.witzprod.com

Cayman Tiger Ray

If you've ever caught hair or harness in the blades of a diver propulsion vehicle, you'll immediately appreciate the unusual design of the Tiger Ray Scooter. The propeller is in the front. This places the prop safely away from gear and body parts. The 12 volt, rechargeable, maintenance-free battery will power the scooter and snorkeler at approximately two miles per hour, for about one hour of continuous run time between charges. The Tiger Ray is operational to depths of 125 feet and is activated by the touch of a magnetic glove—when you let go, it stops. It weighs 40 pounds and has a slight positive buoyancy in fresh and saltwater. Battery, charger and instructional video included. 🐟

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NiteRider HID Dive Light

The HID Dive Light is a 10-watt, 13.2-volt dive light system equivalent to 40 watts of conventional light. This bright and penetrating light is ideal for all types of diving needs. The four-hour burn time provides plenty of time to get all the dives in you want in a day. Features include: 10-watt HID single beam, a soft wrist-mount for putting the light where you need it and reducing the backscatter effect, and a rechargeable 13.2 volt 4.0Ah memory-free NiMH battery. The HID Dive Light weighs just 2.1 pounds and is 4.5 inches wide by 6 inches high by 1.6 inches thick. There's also a heavy-duty belt clip for mounting on a weightbelt, tank strap or cummerbund, and a Microbrute 5 hour International SmartCharger with car adapter. The NiteRider is rated to a depth of 500 feet. 🐟

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Amphicom FM Snorkel

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Aqua Sphere: (877) 643-3483; www.amphicom.com



greatregs

Part II

under \$400

by Daryl Carson

As we said last issue, you don't have to break the bank for a great regulator. In round two of our look at mid-range regs, we offer four solid performers in the under \$400 price category. All have been designed to make you breath easy—both underwater and at the cash register.



MSRP: \$399.95	WEIGHT: 2.55 lbs
HP PORTS: 2	LP PORTS: 5
NITROX: YES, to 40%	

AERIS ATMOS SPORT

This is not your father's regulator. Brand-new to the market, the most obvious innovation on the Atmos Sport's first stage is a specially designed low pressure port swivel. Aimed at eliminating hose snags or pulls, it also makes it easy to route the regulator hose under the arm for divers who prefer such a configuration. When the diver turns his head, the swivel allows the second stage hose to follow. Although not pictured here, the Sport first stage also comes environmentally sealed as standard from the factory. The Sport second stage keeps up the innovative trends. The venturi assist is ratcheted, so that fine tune adjustments can be made and the exhaust tee is extra wide, so that bubbles are thrown out of the diver's field of view. The second stage itself is extremely lightweight and quite compact but made of a durable composite that also offers outstanding strength. And, perhaps most importantly, the internal chamber is specially designed to provide ease of breathing. Instead of using vanes to direct airflow to the mouthpiece as some regs do, the Sport is built so that air entering the second stage is already directed toward the diver's mouth.

Aeris: (800) 647-0605 or www.diveaeris.com



MSRP: \$312
WEIGHT: 2.95 lbs
HP PORTS: 2
LP PORTS: 5
NITROX: YES, to 40%

CRESSI SUB AIRPLUS

The Airplus fits nicely into the lower end of our price range, making it very affordable. But this no-nonsense regulator still offers the performance of a balanced piston first stage, which equates to smooth air delivery at varying depths and, more importantly, at varying tank pressures. This first stage is easily made cold-water ready with the addition of a cold water environmental kit. And, the five low-pressure ports swivel 360 degrees for easy hose routing. The second stage also stays in line with Airplus's sleek design, sporting a tough composite body that offers smart features such as an easy-to-manipulate venturi assist lever and a new, rigid exhaust tee. Divers who like a lot to bite down on may want to upgrade from the standard mouthpiece, but minimalists will be happy with Cressi's regular gear. However, the second stage is extremely light and nearly neutrally buoyant underwater. Finally, a larger exhaust valve has been designed to help reduce exhalation resistance. Cressi: (800) 338-9143 or www.cressisubusa.com

MARES V16 PROTON

For divers that prefer a balanced diaphragm as the foundation of their regulator system, Mares offers the V16 Proton. Two sets of acronyms best describe the V16 first stage. One is DFC, which stands for Dynamic Flow Control. This design helps reduce the intermediate pressure drop during the inhalation phase, thereby lessening inhalation resistance. The second is SCS, or Spherical Core Seal system. This is a fancy way of saying the internal valve mechanism is resistant to corrosion and designed not to wear. The Proton first stage is a bit easier to appreciate, as one of its chief features is a wonderfully small size. It also incorporates a "mesh grid" system. This faceplate design counteracts the tendency for regulators to freeflow. It allows some water to "pass through," which changes flow dynamics and reduces pressure on the purge valve. Mares: (203) 855-0631 or www.mares.com

MSRP: \$389 **WEIGHT:** 2.85 lbs
HP PORTS: 2 **LP PORTS:** 4
NITROX: YES, to 40%



PARKWAY NOVA2 ADJ

Parkway has married their balanced diaphragm first stage with a fully adjustable second stage to make a very attractive option in the mid-range regulator category. The first stage is available in yoke or DIN fittings and offers solid performance, but it's the second stage that will catch the eye of most divers. Although Parkway calls the Nova2 ADJ compact, it is really more of a mid-sized second stage. However, it maintains a slim line thanks in part to a reduced exhaust tee. It is also adjustable, offering both a breathing resistance adjustment knob and a variable venturi assist. Both controls are easy to access and manipulate. The larger control knob on the regulator's side is especially nice for divers that often wear thick gloves. Internally, the Nova2 ADJ features a roller lever that works effortlessly for even easier breathing. Also notable is the large diameter exhaust valve, which reduces exhalation resistance. Parkway: (800) 587-2822 or www.parkwayscuba.com



MSRP: \$305 **WEIGHT:** 2.65 lbs
HP PORTS: 2 **LP PORTS:** 4
NITROX: YES, to 40%

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FOSTERING AN OCEAN OF CURIOSITY

STEP RIGHT UP. BRING THE KIDS. IT'S time to enter Wyland's Undersea World. Time to amaze, to astound.... OK, OK. You get the picture. But the fact is everything about the ocean is amazing. That's probably what drew you to diving in the first place. So why not let your kids in on the fun? Maybe they're not quite ready for buoyancy compensators, air tanks and wetsuits, but you can still fire their imagination—and their curiosity—with a few startling ocean-related facts, lists, records and comparisons.

Let's start with the basics. You probably know why the sea is blue. It reflects the blue light rays from the sun, right? But what about some of the more colorful bodies of water on the map, like the Yellow Sea? (And, no, it isn't based on the same principle as yellow snow.) The Yellow Sea, near China, gets its name from the yellow clay that washes into it from nearby rivers. Then there's the Black Sea, whose muddy bottom is dark from hydrogen sulfide. There's even a White Sea in northwest Russia, which gets its color from the ice that covers it most of the year.

And here's another fact. Anyone who's accidentally gulped a mouthful of seawater knows how salty the ocean can be. Well, scientists have determined that there is enough salt in the

ocean to cover the land with a layer over 520 feet thick!

After you've captured the attention of your kids with those

tidbits, it's time to really impress them and teach them a thing or two about the laws of nature.

Deep Facts

Knowing the effects of pressure is critical in diving. It can mean the difference between life and death. For every 30 feet or so that you descend, the pressure increases by about 15 pounds per square inch. In kid terms, that means the pressure in the deepest parts of the ocean is about the equivalent weight of a hippopotamus balancing on a dime. Not that it's easy to reach that point. A place like the Marianas Trench in the Pacific Ocean, which is considered the deepest point on earth, is so far below the surface that if you dropped a two-pound steel

ball over the side of a boat, it would take over an hour to reach the bottom.

Walls of Water

Kids always want to know about big waves, and who can blame them? On the North Shore of

Oahu, where I live, I see some of the most spectacular waves in the world. Some of them reach heights of 50 feet and crash so hard you can feel the beach quake beneath your feet. But they pale in comparison to some of the largest waves on record. Tsunamis, for example, are giant waves most often caused by earthquakes or volcanoes. They usually pass unnoticed by ships in the open sea, but when they pile up against land, they

In kid terms...the pressure in the deepest parts of the ocean is about the equivalent weight of a hippopotamus balancing on a dime.

can reach heights of hundreds of feet. The highest recorded natural wave towered over 112 feet high; it was seen in 1933 by the crew of the USS *Ramapo*.

Creatures—Large, Small & Fast

Of course, you can't truly impress a kid with ocean facts without mentioning the animals that live there. Sure, most kids know that sharks are among the bigger fish in the sea. What they probably don't know is that there is a species of shark in the Pacific Ocean, called the Spined Pygmy Shark, that measures just six inches when it's fully grown. Or that a big animal such as an adult Blue Whale has to eat four tons of food a day. Or that the fastest hunter in the ocean, the



The speedy Sailfish can reach 70 mph.

Sailfish, can move like a torpedo through the water at nearly 70 miles an hour! Right behind it, and nearly as fast, are the Bluefin Tuna and the swordfish.

Making Tracks

For the most distance traveled in a single day, you've got to look above the ocean. If the conditions are right, the albatross, which glides on air currents above the Southern Ocean, can travel more than 1,000 miles in a single day. For the farthest migration, few can top the 14,000-mile roundtrip journey of the Gray Whale from the Bering Sea to its mating and calving lagoons in Baja California, Mexico. The southward journey takes two to three months.

By now, I'm sure your audience is clinging to your every word. Well, maybe not every word. But you can bet facts like these will, at the very least, whet their appetites to learn more about the marine world. And once a kid's curiosity gets the better of him or her, watch out. You might have a budding marine biologist—or a marine artist—on your hands. 🐟

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Licensed by: The Commission for Independent Education, Tallahassee, FL Lic #94. Composite Photo: Underwater class on the reef at the Institute.

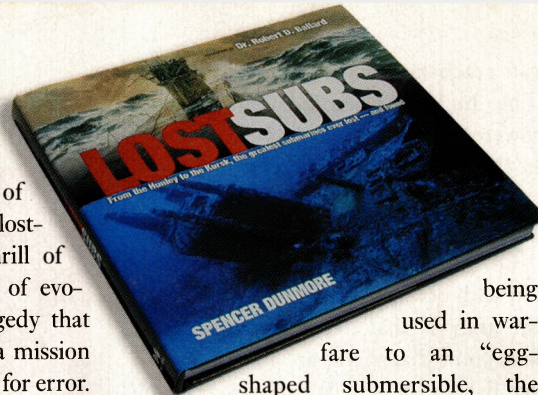
Welcome to the Diver's Library, where each month we bring you the latest in diving media.

SPENCER DUNMORE'S *LOST SUBS* has all the attributes of an ideal soulmate. It is laced with intelligence, attractive (on the inside and out), multi-dimensional and perhaps most importantly, doesn't avoid deep topics.

Lost Subs
by Spencer Dunmore
Da Capo Press
www.dacapopress.com

This captivating chronicle of "...the greatest submarines ever lost- and found" touches on the thrill of invention, the trials of evolution, and the tragedy that often accompanies a mission with so little margin for error.

The timeline traces the first account of a submarine



being used in warfare to an "egg-shaped submersible, the *Turtle*," which was unsuccessfully used against the British during the American War of Independence in 1776. Then on to the first successful, yet tragic, attempt of the manpowered *Hunley* to help break the Union's blockade during the Civil War. Although the *Hunley* showcased the submarine's value as a weapon of war, the cost was the lives of three nine-man crews that went down with it on three separate occasions.



On a grander scale, Dunmore seamlessly reveals the role that submarine warfare had on the beginnings and outcomes of both World War I and II, and how their evolution corresponded with modern warfare—whether it be weapons such as the torpedo, or the tactics and technolo-



gies that sprouted in defense, including the convoy, depth charges and the ASV Mark III (a radar that could detect surfaced submarines at 12 miles away).

Also covered is the Cold War, with hush-hush accounts of rival subs literally

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 tragedy that often accom-
 panies a mission with so
 little margin for error.



bumping into one another at depth, and a clandestine attempt to steal an enemy's sunken sub with hopes of gaining access to the secrets that went down with it. This double-edged triumph of submarine warfare culminates with the senseless sinking of the *Kursk* (the "pride of the post-Soviet navy") in August 2000.

The text is complimented by contemporary and archival photography, paintings and diagrams, making it an enchanting view as well as a good read.



Top: John Thornton, left, and Robert D. Ballard, right, with the 1985 expedition to the RMS Titanic. Bottom: A diver in a rebreather swims near the wreckage of the USS Arizona, 1943. Right: A diver in a rebreather swims near the wreckage of the USS Arizona, 1943. Right: A diver in a rebreather swims near the wreckage of the USS Arizona, 1943.



Lost Subs is a touching tribute to a rare breed of risktakers. As noted in an engaging introduction by Dr. Robert D. Ballard (best known for his discovery of the *Titanic*), regardless of their nationality or mission, "...submariners from different navies have more in common with one another than they do with members of their own fleets who sail on the ocean's surface."

It's the same sense of camaraderie that keeps divers suiting up despite the dangers that can accompany the anticipated discovery—the essence of being amongst soulmates. 🐟

For information on how to submit a product for review in Diver's Library, contact Ryan Allen at ryan.allen@skindivermag.com.



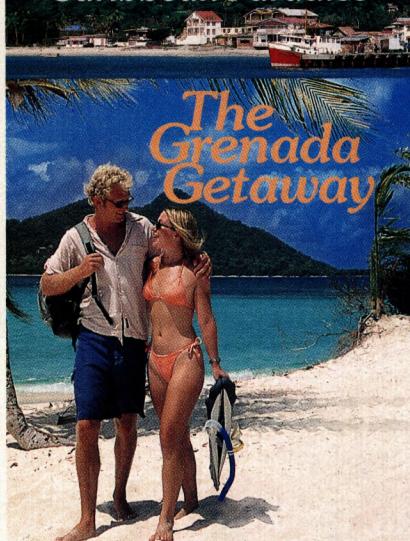
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RISKY BUSINESS

ON JULY 15TH, THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION gave an official nod, approving the use of Navy sonar systems shown to threaten whales.

Jean-Michel Cousteau reported in the December 2001 issue of *Skin Diver*, that these sonar signals are "...unimaginably potent. A signal sent from California, for example, may be picked up in Japan." These powerful sound waves have been shown to cause auditory trauma and even death in marine mammals. In March 2000, the Navy conducted a series of sonar tests near the Bahamas. Within two days, 14 Beaked Whales, two Minke Whales and one Spotted Dolphin were stranded on local beaches. Many of the animals died.

The U.S. Navy argues that the sonar is an imperative tool needed to identify and track potential homeland threats. To legally employ the use of sonar,

In March 2000 the Navy conducted a series of sonar tests near the Bahamas. Within two days, 14 Beaked Whales, two Minke Whales and one Spotted Dolphin were stranded on local beaches. Many of the animals died.

the Navy needs the go-ahead from the National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS). The NMFS recently decided to allow sonar usage after they determined that the system would have "negligible impact" on any marine species. In an effort to maximize whale protection, the Navy is required to stay 12 miles off-shore, while operating the sonar system. An additional mandate requires that the sonar be completely shut off if a marine mammal is detected within a 1.24-mile radius of the vessel.

The Navy acknowledges the role that the sonar tests played in the Bahamas tragedy. They further contend that no future whale deaths will be caused by the sonar due to a cadre of new safety precautions. Environmentalists, however, are not convinced.

The Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) is leading a coalition of environmental groups, including the Humane Society, the League for Coastal Protection, the Cetacean Society International, and the Ocean Futures Society (and its president, Jean-Michel Cousteau) that oppose the use of sonar. On August 7, 2002, this coalition sued the Navy and the NMFS in federal district court.

The group contends that the new sonar system, Low Frequency Active (LFA) sonar is untested. "One of the

Marine mammal deaths have been attributed to auditory trauma caused by use of a new Navy sonar system.



truly disturbing aspects of this system is its unprecedented power and geographic scope," said Joel Reynolds, senior attorney and director of NRDC's Marine Mammals Protection Project. "If the

Navy deploys LFA, tens of thousands of square miles of ocean habitat would be saturated with extremely loud and dangerous sound."

Naomi Rose, a marine mammal scientist with the Humane Society, said, "From a scientific point of view, there is very little question that, given the right set of circumstances, active sonar can kill marine life."

However, in the current state of world affairs, the NMFS's definition of "negligible impact" may well prove palatable to both government and the public. In the act of balancing the interests of national security with the need to protect and preserve natural resources, marine mammals may bear a significant cost. —Georgienne Bradley & JoAnna Montoya

PHOTO: BRADLEY/IRELAND PRODUCTIONS



U.S. AIRWAYS *Caribbean*

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David Doubilet and Jennifer S. Hayes photographically explore Saba and St. Eustatius (see page 62)—each island offers its own exquisite blend of surface beauty and aquatic splendor.

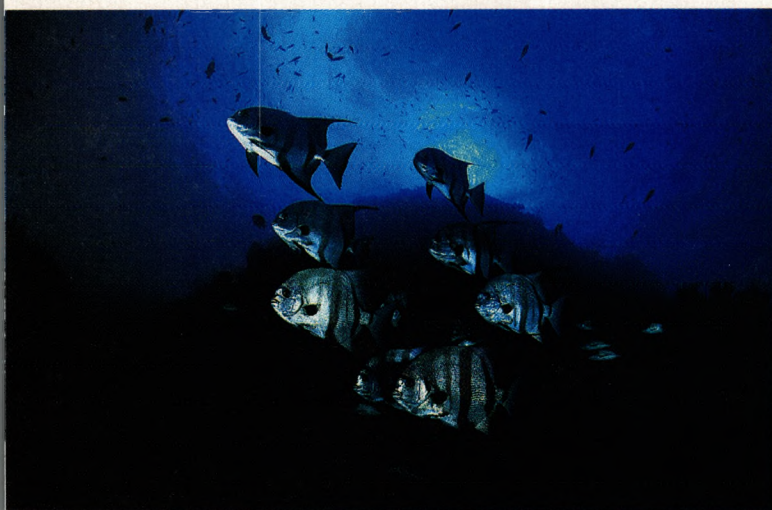
Saba

Diving the Mountains of the Caribbean

FINALLY, WE WERE HEADED SOMEPLACE THAT DAVID, in all of his years of crisscrossing the globe, had not been to yet. The sheer beauty of it was that I had been here before and the fin was now on the other foot. The 15 minute pas-

sage from St. Maarten was punctuated with David's vocal bulletins that went something like this: "I hope there are sharks on the pinnacles—Blacktips I imagine. I saw some good sea horse pictures from here. Did you bring the extension kit for the 105? Do you know we are on a DeHavilland Twin Otter that's built for short takeoffs and...." This last sentence I stopped short with "No, but I do know that whatever this plane is, it is bulging at the rivets with 630 pounds of our gear and, by the way, did we let anyone know in advance how much stuff we have?"

There was a pause in his spirited, one-sided conversation as one of the most dramatic pieces of real estate in the Caribbean appeared outside of his window. Saba soared from a navy blue sea, an enormous emerald green mountain dotted with red roofs and capped with a perfect cloud. Without warning, the seat next to me exploded with activity as David began rifling through his camera bag for something, anything to shoot with. "Wow! Look at this place—you didn't tell me it looked like this—my god it's beautiful." We banked for a tender approach to a strip that was built on a volcanic afterthought, arguably the shortest commercial airstrip on the planet. One glance from Glenn Holm, the director of tourism who met us, said it all—



Spadefish and (opposite page) a Coney at Man O' War Shoals.

BY JENNIFER S. HAYES

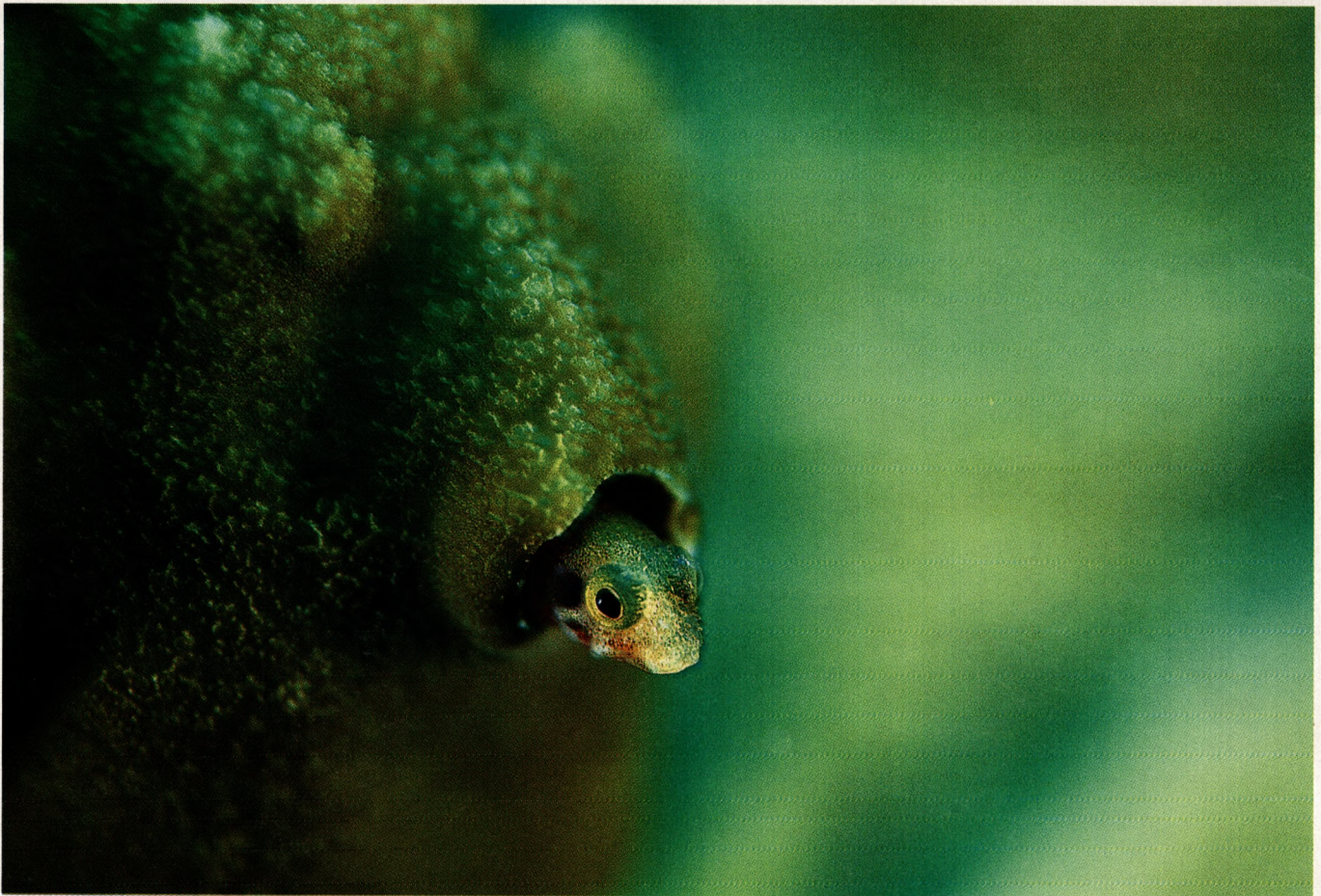


"Saba soared from a navy blue sea, an enormous emerald green mountain dotted with red roofs and capped with a perfect cloud."





Above: Stepping into the wonders of the Saba Marine Park—which include intimate encounters with Blennies (below).



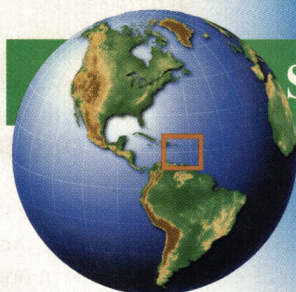
no we had not let anyone know in advance how much gear we had.

Saba or "The Rock" as it is sometimes referred to, more than figuratively, stands out among her island peers. She rises nearly 3,000 feet straight out of the Caribbean and has an ethereal beauty—a mood really. Century-old Saban clapboard cottages, with their former occupants nestled in crypts within their yards, look out over an extraordinary seascape below. At night, with light reflected from a high, cold, white moon, cumulus clouds sail by close enough to touch, casting a ghostly shadow fleet on the sea below. This was a view David compared to night airmail flights in open cockpit bi-planes, as he quietly enjoyed the evening walks to dinner in Winwardside.

During a planning discussion over dinner with John Magor and Lynn Constenaro from Sea Saba, no one would guarantee David his coveted Blacktips swimming in formation around the pinacles or a bonanza of sea horses in every color, make and model or even a Batfish for that matter. David continued with his wish list but John was steadfast, "Yeah, the sea horses were pretty common for a while, and we sometimes find Batfish around the moorings, but you just never know." I thought, "Good for him. No sane person wagers on biology." He and Lynn were confident, however, that we would find a lot to like out there. They, of course, were right. The list of options in the Saba Marine Park seemed endless, including exposed, shallow or deep pinacles, walls, hot springs, lava flows and sand chutes.

Clouds, mist and anxiety gave way to sun as we rolled down the mountain each day in Manny's yellow taxi to a town at the bottom of the mountain, referred to simply enough as "The Bottom." From there it was only a few more switchbacks to Fort Bay, the only landfall suitable for a marina. Stuart Gow, captain and energetic Scotsman, with a penchant for mountain peaks both above and below the waves, was eager for us to see as much of Saba Marine Park as possible, "So yha

Historic buildings, such as Flossie's Cottage, bring a timeless atmosphere to this land of natural beauty.



Skin Diver GUIDE • Saba



GETTING THERE: Located 28 miles southwest of St. Maarten, Saba is reached by a short 12-minute flight on Windward Island Airways (www.fly-winair.com). Daily air travel to and from St. Maarten is offered by American, Continental, US Airways, Air France, AOM and KLM. **FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit:** Year-round.

Topside Climate: On average 80°F, with few degrees difference between summer (June to August) and winter (December to February). **Water Temperature:** Winter months bring cooler water temperatures (77 to 80°F), summer months are toasty (80 to 85°F). **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 1.78 ANG (Netherlands Antilles Guilders) USD and credit cards accepted. **Time Difference:** EST plus 1 hour. **Dive Operators:** Deep Dive Center 011-599-416-3347; www.psabadeep.com • Sea Saba Dive Center 011-599-416-2246; www.seasaba.com **RESOURCES:** Saba Tourist Office 011-599-416-2231 (2322); www.sabatourism.com • Saba Lonely Planet Guide to Saba www.lonelyplanet.com



like what y'have seen up top do yha? Well c'mon, get going, there's more down here than up there."

Diamond Rock sticks out of a confused sea—an ancient volcanic utterance that rises to 50 feet. As you swim across the gray sand bottom, the base of the rock emerges like battlements of an ancient castle. The rock itself is a colorful mosaic of sponges and hard corals accentuated with an occasional purple anemone. A pair of French Angelfish moved across the landscape like living art, pausing at one colorful backdrop after another, while Marbled Morays played hard to get. The top of the rock was wreathed in foam—like clouds smothering a mountain peak. In the late afternoon sun, David noticed that a silhouette of Diamond Rock was magically projected onto the rippling screen of white foam. Our dive guides appeared to be flying through the undulating shadow.

Farther offshore, a group of pinnacles rise like exclamation points. We rolled off the boat and swam down 90 feet to the Eye of the Needle in the company of distant whale songs. David and I looked at each other in amazement as the pinnacle pierced the blue in front of us—we gave each other the thumbs up signal for "it doesn't get much better than this." Space comes at a premium on a volcanic needle in open water, and we were looking at an ocean address equivalent to the Trump Towers. A territorial dispute between a grouper and a moray erupted in front of us, and a comical chase scene ensued as the eel relentlessly pursued his tormentor in circles around the pinnacle. Leaving the pinnacle, we made our way across a blue void to the plateau, where Nurse Sharks nestled in nooks and Blacktips were vague shapes in the distance.

Man O' War Shoals, Ladder Labyrinth and Diamond

The shadow of Diamond Rock plays on the foamy waters.



Saba



Above left: The top of The Needle. Above right: A box crab peeks out of volcanic gravel.



Rock provided us great second dives after working on the deeper pinnacles. Man O' War was like a multi-level department store of biological commerce. Groupers patrolled at the base of this steep structure while a school of spadefish swept past us several times in mid-water, and a city of Secretary Blennies busied themselves in the upper reaches of each pinnacle. The mustard-colored sands at Ladder Labyrinth were warm to the touch and a reminder of the volcanic parentage of Saba.

Our last dive was Tent Reef. We had already visited Tent Reef Wall to the north, which was a dramatic and productive wall dive. One of Saba's most popular shallow sites, Tent Reef. It is a busy small wall under a shallow over-hang roof. In the shade of the undercut there were gardens of black gorgonians and orange sponges that concealed Red Hinds. A swim east lead us through a boulder field onto a sand slope that is home to jawfish, Peacock Flounders and an infinite colony of Garden Eels.

We spent our last night making the gear disappear back into the boxes and treating ourselves to one last look at the shadow fleets. In the morning, we stopped below Hell's Gate to photograph a DeHavilland landing—the same one that would carry us on to St. Eustatius. We were trading in one mystery for another. 🐟

Special thanks to Sea Saba for diving services and assistance with this article.

St. Eustatius

*Reefs Among The
Shards Of History*



BY JENNIFER S. HAYES

PHOTOS: JENNIFER S. HAYES; OPPOSITE PAGE: DAVID DOUBILET

SEVENTEEN MILES AND A WORLD OF DIFFERENCE STAND between the islands of St. Eustatius and Saba. Statia, as the locals refer to their island, has a defiant edge to her. She should, as she was colonized by Dutch traders in 1631 and by 1816 had changed hands 22 times. But her edge is her charm. The island has a long curving coastline, large bays and mountainous extinct volcanoes at both ends. Unlike vertical Saba, whose lack of anchorages left her isolated, Statia became a modern free port, an early version of Hong Kong in the Caribbean. The island was a major clearinghouse for traded goods that earned her the name Golden Rock.

David, obsessed with history and new places to dive, was in his element. We were swimming over a moonscape of gray sand and patches of turtle grass, looking for creatures

in an area known as Bluebead Hole. This sand plain was anchorage for countless ships over the centuries, and the bottom is loaded with history as well as life. The sand is full of

Pike Blennies, cleaning stations and the occasional Peacock Flounder. Flying Gurnards, flashing teal blue pectoral fins in a monotone world, glided away from us over hidden onion bottles, case gin bottles and clay pipe stems flung over the sides of traders 300 years ago. Glenn Faires, of Golden Rock Dive Center, found a maroon and white anglerfish that was busy fishing, waving its lure at the end of a spine.

During the dive, David and I kept an eye open for blue beads—the namesake of the dive site. The glass beads, made in Amsterdam in the 17th and 18th centuries, were a valuable currency of the active slave trade that existed on Statia. Despite their less



Opposite page: Old Gin House. Above: A frogfish at Bluebead Hole. Below: The “steel sculpture garden” of STENAPA Reef.



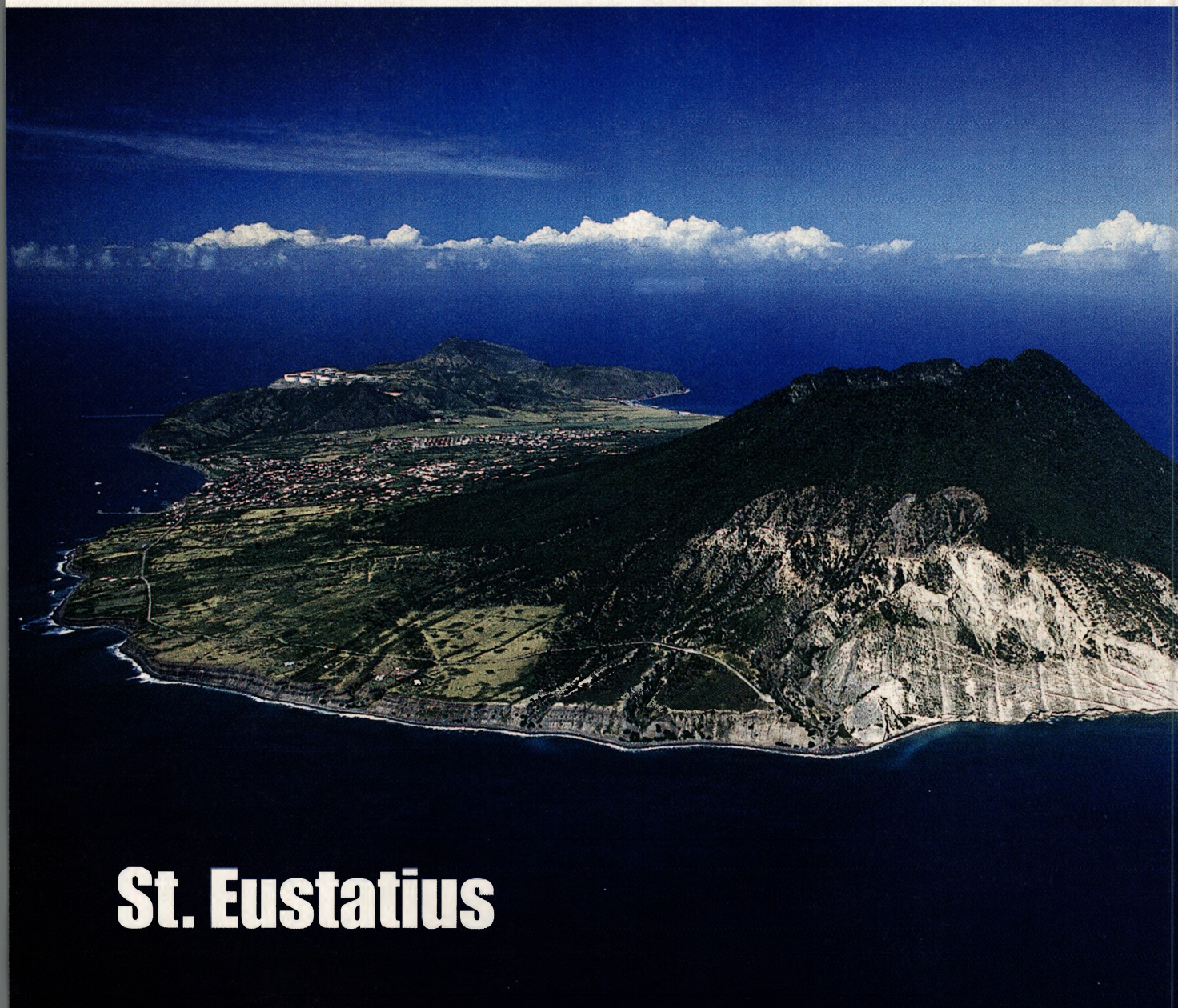


than noble history, the beads remain an object of desire and a challenge to find for divers and locals alike. We failed the blue bead challenge and felt pretty humbled as Glenn emptied his BC pockets of clay pipe stems and pieces of blue beads.

A day of diving complete, we walked back along the waterfront to the Gin House, an exquisite, open-air, colonial manor house in Lower Town. The short walk was like strolling the pages of a history book. Above us, Fort Oranje looked out over a roadstead once filled with traders. In 1776, St. Eustatius went against the wishes of the English and sold gunpowder, shot and arms to an emerging nation at war with the British—the American colonies. To add

Above: Bigeyes at the Double Wreck. Below: Extinct volcanoes anchor the ends of St. Eustatius.

PHOTOS: (TOP TO BOTTOM) DAVID DOUBILET, JENNIFER S. HAYES; (OPPOSITE PAGE) JENNIFER S. HAYES



St. Eustatius

insult to injury, St. Eustatius was first to recognize the independence of the American colonies in the form of a "ship's salute" to an American ship that called upon the port. This event is known simply as the First Salute. The English were not amused and retaliated by destroying Statia's seawall and inner harbor, blowing the warehouses to oblivion and scattering the population.

Shipwrecks from this colonial period have become reefs in the long flat shelf of Statia's protected coast. At Double Wreck, two ships from the 1700s are now habitat for small schools of squirrelfish, Striped Grunts and a jumble of sponges across the bottom. Southern Stingrays bury themselves in the gray sands near the wrecks, their yellow slit



Above: The local fishing fleet. Below: An anemone shrimp.



eyes barely visible. At the eastern end of Double Wreck there are two enormous anchors. One sits on the sand like a display in a courtyard of a marine museum. A newer generation of wrecks make up STENAPA Reef. This is a large scale artificial reef site sponsored by the St. Eustatius National Parks Foundation. David described the tugboat and barges as a large steel sculpture garden accented with schools of grunts and snapper. A squadron of barracuda patrolled above the wrecks and, occasionally, one would leave formation to investigate the shadowy area between shipwreck and sand.

The scimitar curve of St. Eustatius is a natural barrier against the tradewinds and marching swells of the open Atlantic. To the south, the flat plateau of the roadstead gives way to a series of rolling reefs, canyon-like fissures and finally steep walls. It is an exquisite coral kingdom flooded with clear blue ocean water—a gateway between the Atlantic and Caribbean.

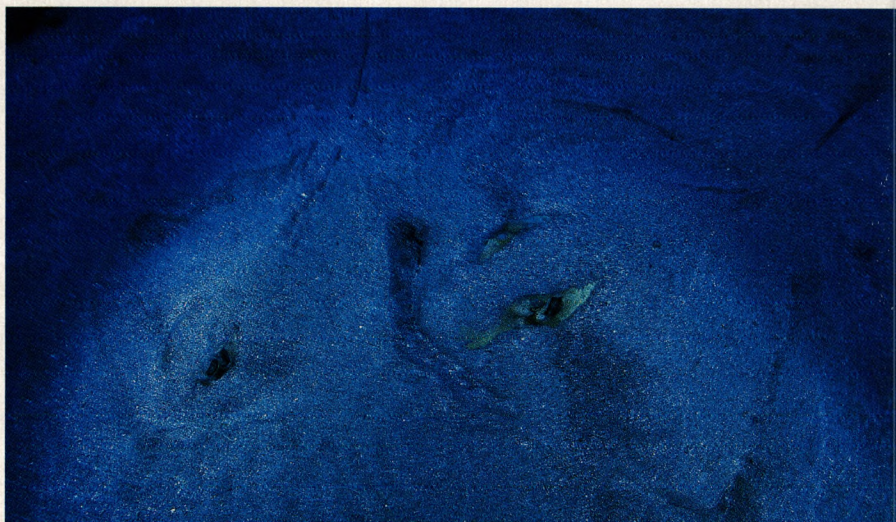
The living reef systems of the island were a great surprise and a perfect compliment to our dives into Statia's history. Hangover Reef has a long false wall that drops to about 65 feet. The lip provided a raceway for silver Striped Grunts and Goatfish. Coral overhangs doubled as lobster garages. Sponges, homes to shy Golden Moray Eels, covered the reef. A pair of Gray Angelfish joined a loose parade of snappers flowing through a forest of gorgonians.

St. Eustatius was a critical player in the history of the Caribbean—the New World. It was a position that, for a time, made it one of the wealthiest places in the world, yet its true riches, the reefs, remain intact and hidden beneath the surface.

Special thanks to Dive Statia and Golden Rock Dive Center. 🐟



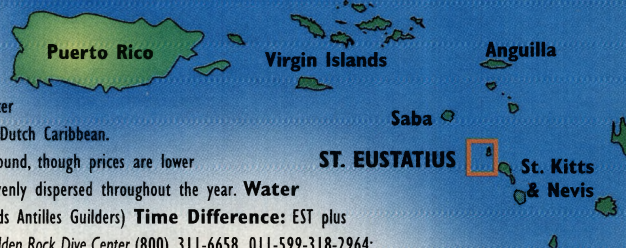
**Above: A Triplefin at Hangover Reef.
Right: Stingrays in the sand at
Double Wreck. Opposite Page: The
tugboat at STENAPA Reef.**





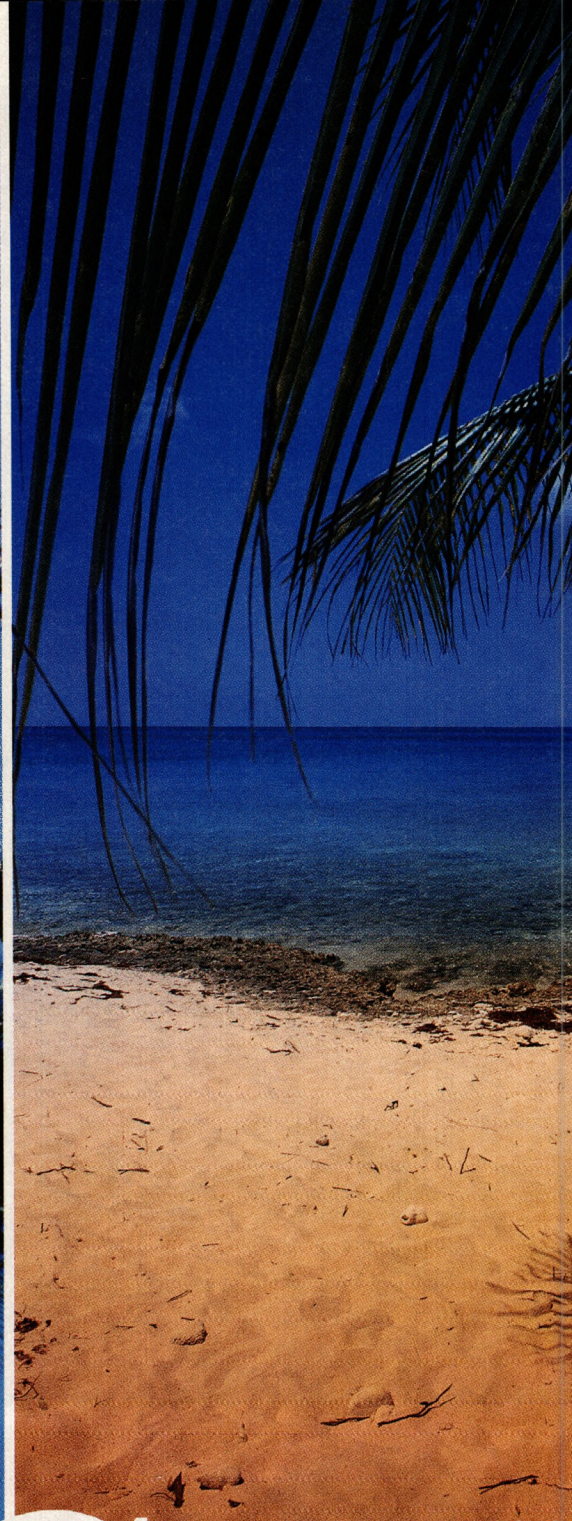
Skin Diver GUIDE • St. Eustatius

GETTING THERE: Statia is served six times daily by Windward Island Airways (WINAIR, www.fly-winair.com) from St. Maarten. Daily air travel to and from St. Maarten is offered by American, Continental, US Airways, Air France, AOM and KLM. With sister islands Saba and St. Maarten, Statia forms the Windward Islands of the Dutch Caribbean.



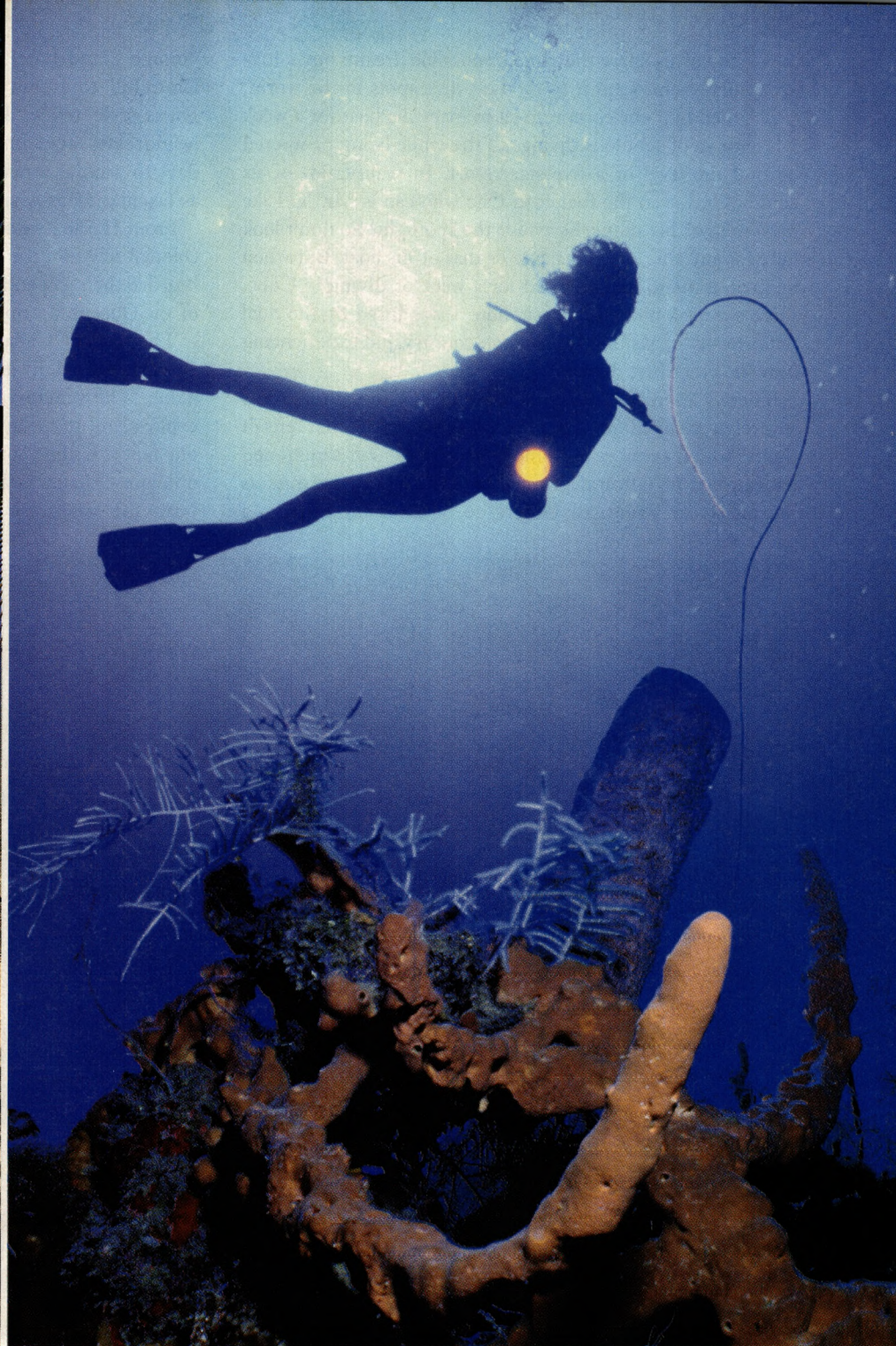
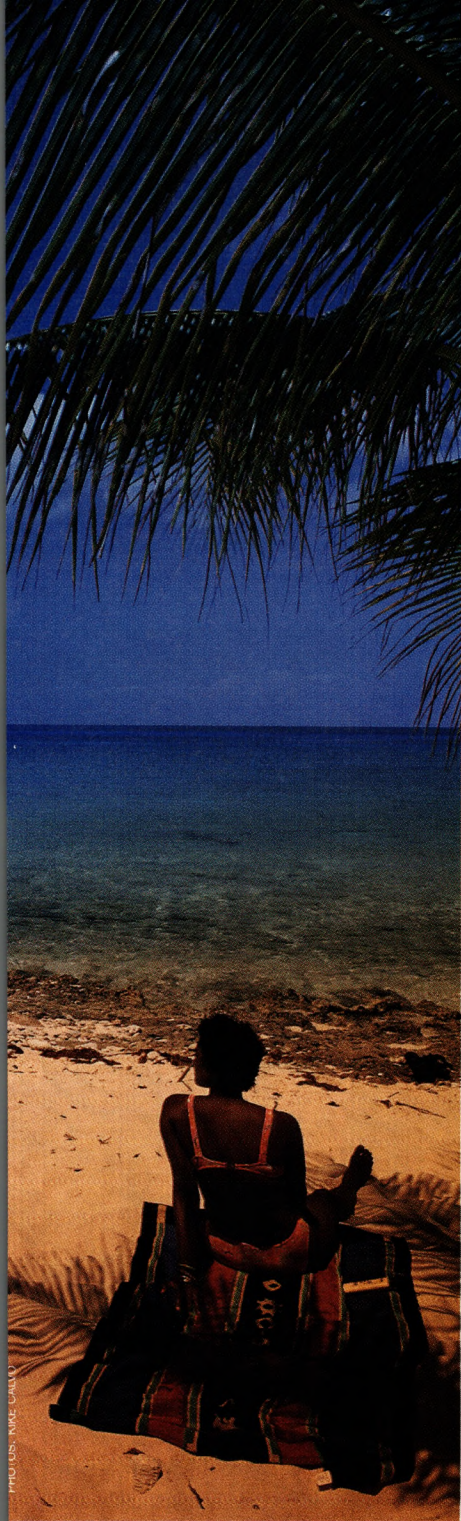
ST. EUSTATIUS FACTS & TIPS: Best Time To Visit: Year-round, though prices are lower

December to February. **Topside Climate:** Daytime average of 80°F. Moderate rainfall is fairly evenly dispersed throughout the year. **Water Temperature:** Varies from 78 to 82°F. **Exchange Rate:** 1.00 (USD) = 1.8 ANG (Netherlands Antilles Guilders) **Time Difference:** EST plus 1 hour. **Dive Operators:** Dive Statia (405) 843-7846, 011-599-318-2435; www.divestatia.com • Golden Rock Dive Center (800) 311-6658, 011-599-318-2964; www.goldenrockdive.com **RESOURCES:** St. Eustatius Tourist Office 011-599-318 2433 (2213); www.statiatourism.com • Lonely Planet Guide to St. Eustatius www.lonelyplanet.com



Culb

Eric Hanauer tastes



aCapitalistStyle

the forbidden fruits of Cuba while diving from a private luxury yacht.

Many of us share the same impossible dream: buy a luxury yacht, send it to the best dive spots in the world, then hop our corporate jet to meet the boat for a week or so of fabulous diving, all the while being pampered beyond the level of a five-star resort. In reality, few of us could afford even the fuel cost. One who can is Mr. X. Like most men of his status, he avoids the spotlight. So don't look here for any clue as to his name or that of his boat. But when he invited me to hop onboard for a week of diving in Cuba, there wasn't a moment's hesitation. I was lured by the dual opportunity of visiting a forbidden country and experiencing how the other half dives.

There's an aura about going to Cuba. Although travel is severely restricted for U.S. citizens, the reality is that tens of thousands go every year. Some go as members of sanctioned educational or cultural groups, or with special permits as journalists or scientists. Others go beneath the radar, via

vintage grand hotel that has hosted guests from Winston Churchill to Kevin Costner. At night it featured a Las Vegas-style revue, 1950s version, with fruit and feather headdresses adorning the talented dancers. We had two days to wander around the city and taste its culture. It was as fascinating as what we would soon discover underwater.

From Havana we took a charter flight to Trinidad, a small colonial town on the southern shore of the island. There we boarded the yacht and set out for Jardines de la Reina (Gardens of the Queen), a string of offshore reefs and tiny islands.

The reefs of Cuba are like the Caribbean must have been 40 years ago. Many of the places we dived didn't even have a name. The itinerary was flexible, allowing the freedom to explore and to make additional dives at places that grabbed our fancy. Unlike land-based operations, our diving was far offshore. That was another advantage, because few Cuban boats can venture out that far. Fuel is strictly rationed to



Baseball, played with sticks and packing tape, is enjoyed with the same passion as Vegas-style stage shows.

Canada, Mexico or Caribbean ports.

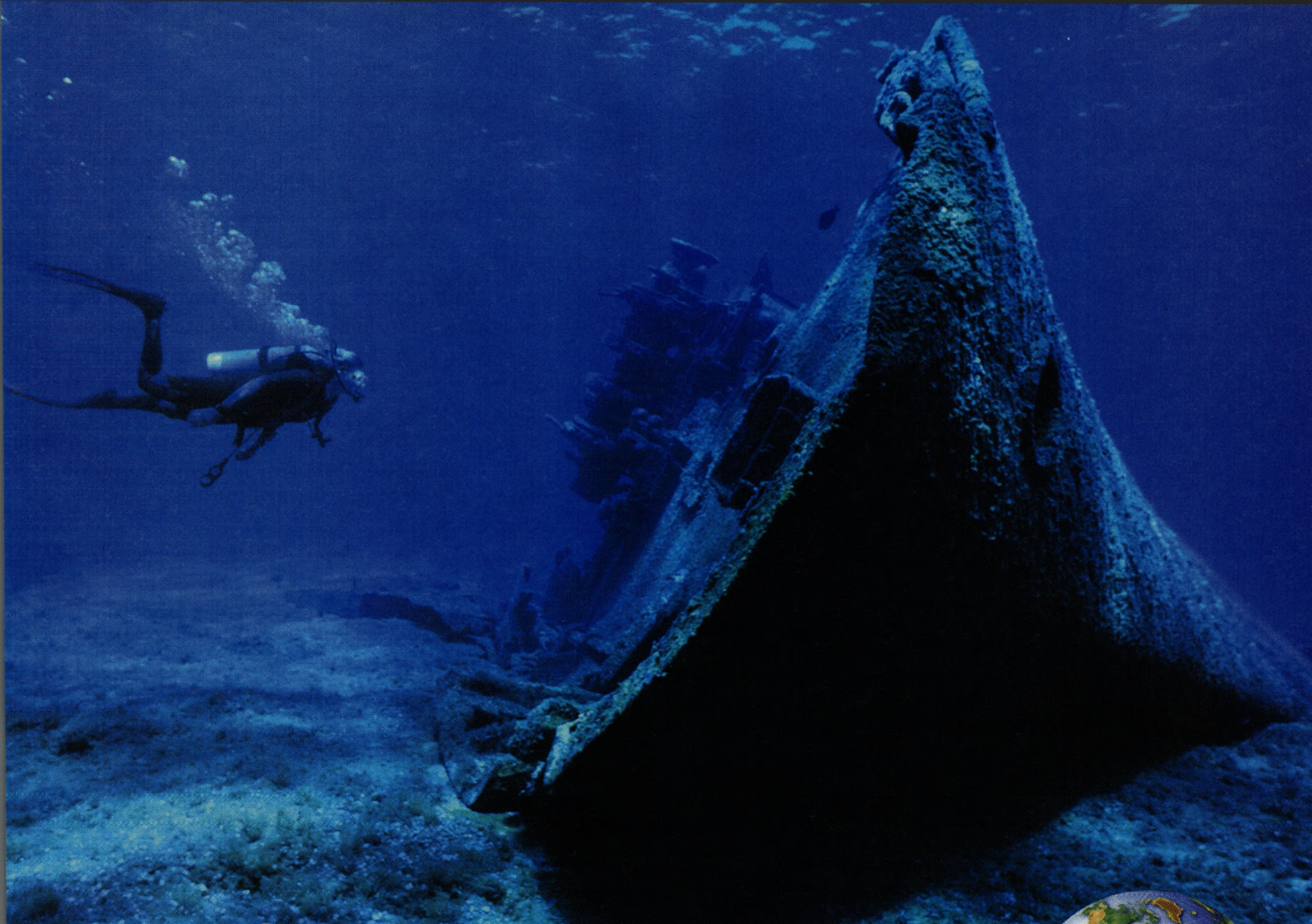
Upon arrival in Cuba, visitors find a country locked in a time warp. That's evidenced by the stately but decaying buildings that line the maze of narrow streets in Old Havana. American land yachts of the 1950s tailfin era are kept running by a mix of cannibalized Russian parts and Cuban ingenuity. People stroke their chin when talking about Fidel Castro, but most billboards and posters commemorate the patron saint of the revolution, Che Guevara. Kids play baseball in the streets using a stick and a ball of packing tape. Spandex pants in day-glow colors are stretched well beyond the limits of good taste around the bottoms of women who would be better served by muumuus.

Karen and I met Mr. and Mrs. X at the Nacional, a 1930s

ensure that mariners don't make detours to Florida. We did have a couple of encounters with fishermen, who approached the yacht to trade lobsters for aspirin and Immodium. They are paid monthly regardless of what they catch, so lobsters serve as currency under Cuba's system.

Lobsters don't seem to be endangered, because we saw lots of big ones crawling out of their holes in daylight, as if they hadn't seen divers before. Delicate sea fans were intact and unspoiled, another indication that this area sees minimal diving pressure.

Devil's Hole lived up to its reputation as one of Cuba's premiere sites. We entered a crack in the reef at 35 feet, following a dark tunnel that spilled us out on a sheer wall at 85 feet. As far as we dropped down, there was nothing but indigo



Skin Diver **GUIDE** Cuba



GETTING TO CUBA

Travelers should be aware that the United States has no diplomatic relations with Cuba and that the Helms-Burton Bill mandates penalties for spending any money there.

Several Canadian and Mexican travel agencies arrange trips for Americans. They book flights, accommodations and diving with local operators. All bills are paid to the agency, so visitors aren't breaking U.S. law. If you want to buy something while over there, the tour guide buys it and you reimburse him or her.

Applications for visas to Cuba are handled by the Cuban Interests Section at the Swiss Embassy in Washington. You'll need a legitimate reason to go, such as business, diplomacy or journalism. It may take 4 to 6 weeks, so apply early via e-mail: seconscuba@worldnet.att.net

More specific information may be found in Cuba guidebooks from Lonely Planet and Moon Publications.

BEST TIME TO VISIT

Dry season is November to April.

TOPSIDE CLIMATE

Winter 79°F, Summer 86°F

WATER TEMPERATURE

Winter 75°F, Summer 82°F

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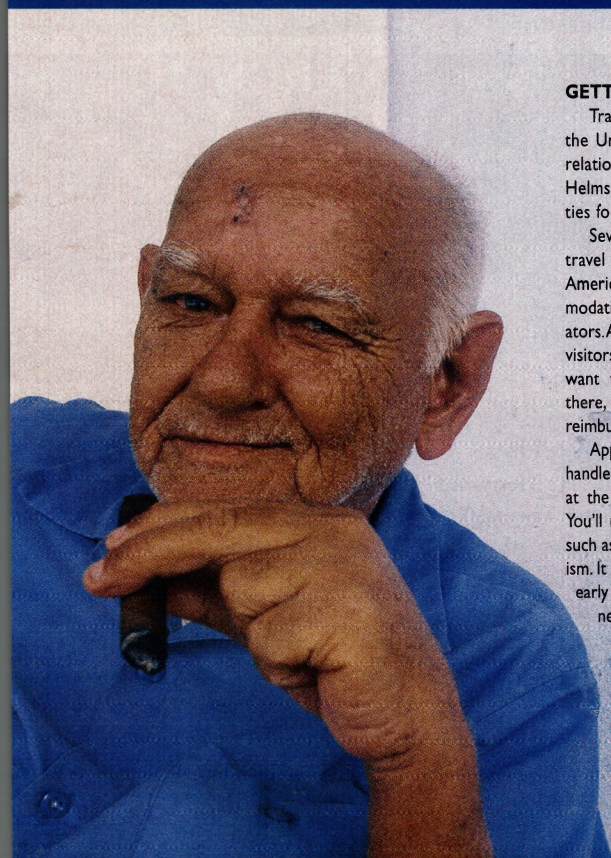
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Havana, even in stately decay, still holds its charm.

water below. I have no idea how deep the wall goes, but it was absolutely vertical as far as I could see. It's a spectacular wall, rivaling the best known ones in the Caribbean. Multicolored sponges and whip corals decorate the surroundings and provide shelter for reef fish. Dozens of blue chromis were aligned in cleaning stations, standing on their heads while being serviced by tiny yellow wrasse.

As we ascended, my buddy pointed out a squadron of long, slender fish near the surface. At first, I wondered what she was excited about; they looked like fat needlefish. Suddenly I realized that in the crystal clear water there was no size reference. They were sailfish, about a half dozen of them, each eight to 10 feet long.

Our next big fish encounter was more up close and personal. Hundreds of silvery tarpon paraded by us in a seemingly endless procession, splitting as they swam within a couple of feet, then reforming as they passed the divers. For at least five minutes, we were enveloped by the silvery tide, their big scales reflecting the lights of my video camera. Just to prove the encounter was no accident, it was repeated the

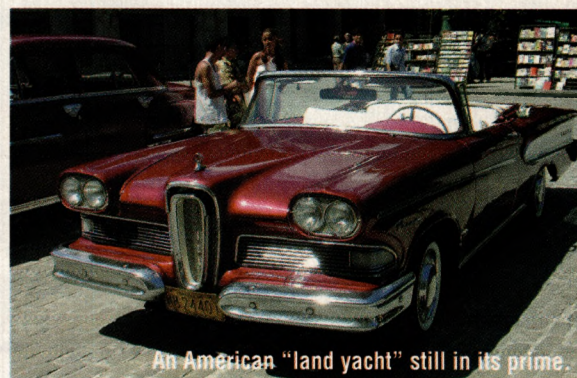
72 www.skin-diver.com

following day at another reef.

Most areas were alive with fish. One vivid memory is a school of hundreds of Yellowtail Snappers blanketing a shallow reef. As the passing swells dappled the sunlight across their bodies, the interplay of light and shadow was almost hypnotic.

Another incredible site was Banco de Jagua, which is a navigation hazard and features a half dozen shipwrecks flattened by winter storms. My favorite was an old steel hulled fishing boat, badly battered but a fantastic habitat for fish life, from barracudas hovering near the surface to snappers in the interior. Shafts of light spilled in through an overhead skylight and through the portholes, while fish swarmed in the shadows. Several big groupers were hiding underneath the hull. A resident Nurse Shark, disturbed from its sleep, lazily joined them.

Underwater, as on land, we found unexpected pleasures. On safety stops, we encountered tiny thimble jellyfish pulsating at an accelerated rate, along with a lonely Remora seeking a place to hitch a ride, finally making the questionable choice of the hull of our




An American "land yacht" still in its prime.



a crack in the reef at 35 feet spilled us out on a sheer wall at 85 feet.

inflatable boat. We kayaked and freedived in the mangroves, the soft bottom lined with upside-down jellyfish, *Cassiopea*. Memorable evenings included beach cookouts and iguana encounters.

The luxury of the yacht surpassed that of the most deluxe live-aboard I'd ever been on. Three staterooms and one master suite accommodated six passengers. The wood—even the floor—was polished to a mirror shine. Bathroom fixtures were the kind that I'd envied in designer stores, but could never afford. There was plenty of room to move around while a crew of five pampered us. Of course, they keep everything spotless, cook up gourmet meals and take care of our dive







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gear. The only thing we ever had to do was roll off the skiff into the water.

It was a decadent way to experience the waters off of a place where luxury is hardly available to the masses. But it did not keep us from discovering the true personality of Cuba, which was vividly illustrated by an incident that happened on our second day in Havana. Karen and I were strolling in the old city when suddenly a man sprinted from behind and grabbed her purse, disappearing in the labyrinth of narrow streets. People congregated at each corner, yelling and pointing, a few chasing the thief. Through six or eight blocks, we followed their directions amid shouts and screeching tires. Finally we came upon an unmarked car, the perpetrator in handcuffs in the back seat. A citizen had tackled him and held him down while a plain-clothes cop made the arrest.

We were then treated to a display of Cuban bureaucracy, spending nearly three hours in a fortress-like police station, replete with drawbridge, repeating the same report seven times. Each attempt to leave was politely but firmly refused. Finally an English-speaking police officer had us write one last report in longhand. He explained that people don't tolerate street crime because of its negative impact on tourism and on their community. He also turned down a reward that probably equaled one month's pay.

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In Havana, the music finds you.

Even though our nations' politics are light years apart, Cuban people like Americans on a face-to-face basis. One reason is that they realize we had to jump through lots of hoops to get there. Another is the millions of dollars that visitors bring into an ailing economy that needs all the help it can get. Tourism, primarily from Europe, is the leading source of foreign cash.

Havana has become a bastion of capitalism in a communist state. Stately homes on the seaside street, the Malecon, are being refurbished to a degree of faded glory, in hopes of selling them to foreigners. You don't have to look for legendary Cuban music; the bands will find you and play for your dollars. Street hustlers try to sell everything from Cuban cigars to Cuban women. Because of their access to dollars, bellhops make more than college professors. White collar workers use their cars as taxis to get in on the dollar economy.

American visitors from Ernest Hemingway to Jimmy Carter have been entranced by the soul of Cuba. So have I. On three different levels, I had lived a diver's dream. The underwater life is the richest I've seen in the Caribbean. The yacht offered a sampling of a world that I'll never be a part of, but it sure was nice to visit. And the warmth of Cuba's people is recalled every time I hear their vibrant music. 🐟

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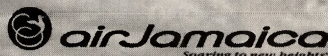
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FREEFLOW

Shark FAQs

continued from page 21

SDM: Speaking of shark's predatory instincts, let's talk about the topic most often on divers' minds—shark attacks. It appears as

though the number of shark attacks is increasing every year. What's happening?

JC: Actually, the number of shark attacks has remained fairly constant over the last several years, but the media sensationalizes every incident, so the total number appears greatly exaggerated. Worldwide there are only about a dozen shark fatalities a year. This is surprisingly low, considering the continuous population growth and the increasing number of people who frequent the ocean. Of the approximately 450 species of sharks, only a few are known to attack humans. Overall, a person is several thousand times more likely to die from a mosquito bite than by a shark attack.

SDM: Is a shark excited by human blood?

JC: No. A shark's sensory organ is much more attuned to the blood of fish and seals than human blood. We've conducted tests that demonstrate that sharks are more attracted to a tiny amount of fish blood than buckets and buckets of cow blood, which is similar to human blood.

SDM: Do sharks spit out human flesh when they realize it isn't their normal food?

JC: In some cases, Great White Sharks in North America have released their human victims after an initial bite. Great Whites also reject sea otters. Some shark species are very picky and will only eat certain types of fish or animals. But, most sharks are intelligent opportunistic predators that will consume whatever prey they can conveniently take.

SDM: Is swimming, surfing, snorkeling or scuba diving more likely to incite a shark attack?

JC: It depends on the circumstances. But, the surest way to provoke a shark attack while engaging in any of these activities is to carry speared fish or splash around in shallow, murky water where sharks are known to congregate. You are also more likely to encounter sharks in a feeding mode in shallow

water at dusk and nighttime.

SDM: Are sharks attracted to shiny objects, like gold jewelry?

JC: Yes. Sharks have very, very efficient eyes. Their eye pigments are finely attuned to the water color so that they can distinguish prey, and they can perceive any contrast in the water. So, flashing objects may attract them.

SDM: Don't sharks locate their prey with their electromagnetic sensors?

JC: The electromagnetic sensory organs are used primarily at very close range. Sharks use their eyesight and their keen sense of smell to locate prey from a distance.

SDM: What is the best thing to do when confronted by a menacing shark?

JC: Exit the water as quickly as possible.

SDM: Have you ever been bitten?

JC: No.

SDM: At what depth range are most sharks found?

JC: Sharks are found at all depths, usually down to about 6,000 feet. However, most sharks inhabit shallow water, because that's where their food source is most abundant.

SDM: Do most sharks travel alone?

JC: Some sharks travel in schools, but most are solitary.

SDM: How did the rumor start that sharks have perfect immune systems?

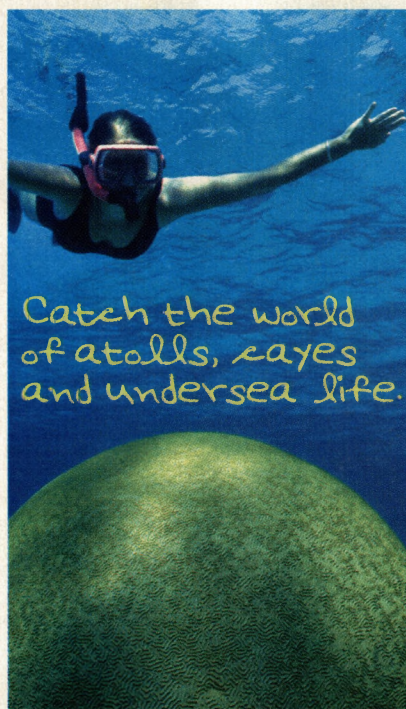
JC: Probably because we very rarely see sick sharks. It is more common to see sharks with mechanical injuries or starving to death, but not diseased.

SDM: Is there any truth to the belief that sharks hold secrets which can cure human ailments?

JC: No. Whereas sharks and humans both share some of the same characteristics in their immune systems, such as blood complement systems and antibodies, biochemically they are totally dissimilar.... Knowledge gathered from sharks cannot be transferred to human biology.

SDM: Shark feeding by scuba divers has become a highly controversial sub-

continued from page 78



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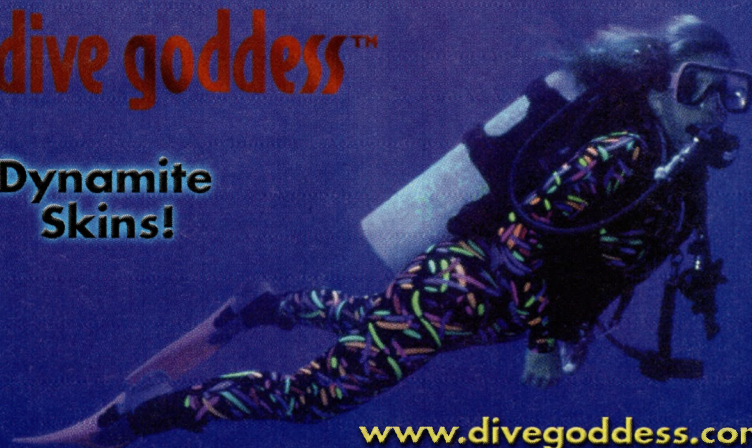
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Shark FAQs

continued from page 77

ject. Do you feel that shark feeding by divers should be outlawed everywhere, as it is in Florida?

JC: It's a very difficult thing to generalize, because there are equally strong pros and cons. Humans feeding sharks may alter the animals' normal feeding habits and it may even train sharks to harass subsequent divers in the area (with the expectation of getting food). On the other hand, shark feeding promotes an enormous amount of support for these animals. If shark feeding is handled safely by professionals and with the right shark species, it's an exhilarating thing to watch. It is educational and it provides a strong motivation for people to protect sharks that they could never experience elsewhere. So, in my opinion, shark feeding should not be categorically outlawed, but should be considered situation by situation.

SDM: How do you feel about displaying sharks in captivity at aquaria?

JC: I have no problem with that. Given the fact that hundreds of thousands of sharks are slaughtered recklessly each year, taking a few dozen sharks a year to educate and inspire people is worth it. There are maybe a few hundred sharks in aquaria worldwide today, which is less than the number of sharks caught by a commercial long line boat in a day!

SDM: Which of the known shark species are currently endangered?

JC: Many species are endangered, particularly those which are caught incidentally in tuna and swordfish fisheries and those which are fished for their fins by commercial fishing fleets. I am not opposed to fishing sharks as a food source, but it is appalling that such large numbers of sharks are killed wantonly every year.

SDM: What can divers do to protest and prevent over-exploitation of sharks?


JC: Divers can join an organization actively involved in shark conservation and they can boycott shark products not taken in a sustainable manner and in countries that engage in uncontrolled shark exploitation. 🐟

[illegible]

For more details, visit the Web at www.nabsdivers.org or call (800) 521-NABS.

The PADI Diving Society's 3rd Annual Total Submersion Dive Festival is November 14 through November 21, 2002. The trip includes airfare from Miami, seven-night accommodations at Sunset House Resort, breakfast daily, four days of boat diving, unlimited shore diving and on-island transfers to and from the airport. Also, the festival will have goodie bags for guests, photo contest, underwater poker run, beach barbecue, cocktail parties, special guests, informative seminars, free gifts and prizes all week long.

Beneath the Sea Photo Competition

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2002 Kona



Best of Show

Janet Martin *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver Backpack, frame, Pelican NEMO light, Body Glove wetsuit, Oceanic briefcase, Peter Hughes trip to Palau or Papua New Guinea*

A few months ago, *Skin Diver* descended upon the Big Island of Hawaii for a bash called the Kona Classic Underwater Photography and Art Festival. More than 50 readers joined us for a week of diving and the chance to rub fins with (and learn from) some of the world's best underwater shooters. Photo pros included our own Marty Snyderman, as well as Bob Talbot, Norbert Wu and others. Here we honor the event's photo contest winners.



1st Place - Macro

John Byrnes *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Sea & Sea YSD90DX multistrobe*

2nd Place Janet Martin

frame, Scuba Pro regulator

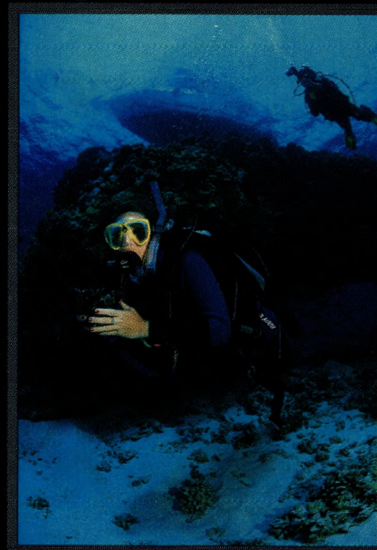
1st Place - Diver Image

Charles Douglas

Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Sea & Sea Motor Marine II camera

2nd Place Janet Martin

frame, Scuba Pro regulator



1st Place - Wide Angle

John Monk *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Scuba Pro regulator S600*

2nd Place John Monroe

frame, Oceanic regulator



Classic Underwater Photography & Art Festival

BY MICHELLE DANNER

1st Place - Humor

John Monroe *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Oceanic computer*

2nd Place Janet Martin

frame, Body Glove wetsuit



1st Place - Topside

Janet Martin *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Oceanic computer*

2nd Place John Monk

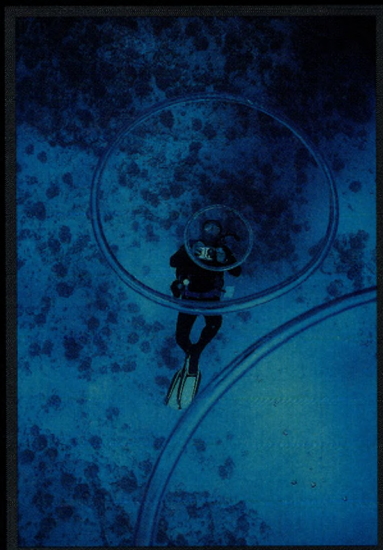
frame, Scuba Pro Sport computer



1st Place - Animal Portrait

Charles Douglas *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, UWATEC Smart Pro Scuba Pro computer*

2nd Place Gary Peplow *frame, Oceanic regulator*



1st Place - Creative

John Monroe *Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Scuba Pro BC*

2nd Place Gary Peplow

frame, Oceanic computer

The Glory Days

The Kona Classic (April 27-May 4) opened with a diver soiree that set the tone for the rest of the week. First came the introductions. On hand were Guy Miller, *Skin Diver* Publisher, Marty Snyderman, *Skin Diver* Field Editor and *Skin Diver* staff. But for most attendees, the best part was meeting the photo pros. Along with Marty, divers met Jim Watt, Doug Perrine, Norbert Wu, David Fleetham and Bob Talbot. Food poured out from the kitchen as people signed up for the week's events and chatted about the

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Kona Classic Underwater Photography & Art Festival

diving to come. There were also some reunions, as one couple showed up that had also participated in last year's *Skin Diver*

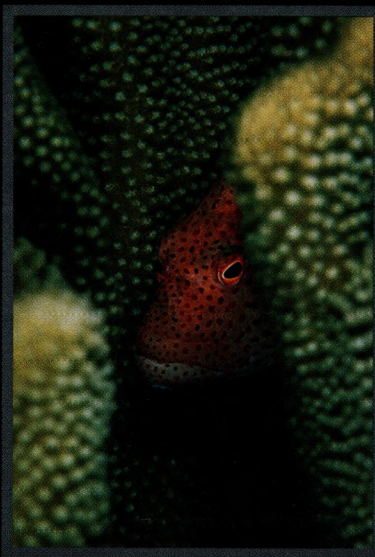
parties, diving, prizes, a 5/10k run, an art festival, a Body Glove-sponsored kids treasure hunt, a luau and more. And, naturally, there were plenty of product demos. New cameras and accessories were available from SeaLife ReefMaster Cameras and Sea & Sea Underwater Photography.



Roatan Underwater Photography Competition in Honduras.

Festivities for the week included presentations from the photo pros,

Of course, the most thrilling part of the week was taking advantage of the Big Island's fantastic diving. This included the world-renowned Manta Ray night dives off the Kona coast. It was the highlight for many and became the setting for the Best of Show winning photo.



1st Place - Locals Only Competition

Rick Decker Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, Peter Hughes Trip to Palau or Papua New Guinea

2nd Place Rick Decker

Two days of diving with Jack's Diving Locker, Oceanic backpack

1st Place - Point & Shoot Competition

sponsored by Sea & Sea Cameras and SeaLife ReefMaster Cameras

David Dinubilo Wyland trophy, Skin Diver backpack, frame, SeaLife ReefMaster Digital DC200 camera

2nd Place Linda Bascom

Sea & Sea MX-10/YS-40A camera kit



Presents



The Kona Classic

Underwater Photography & Art Festival

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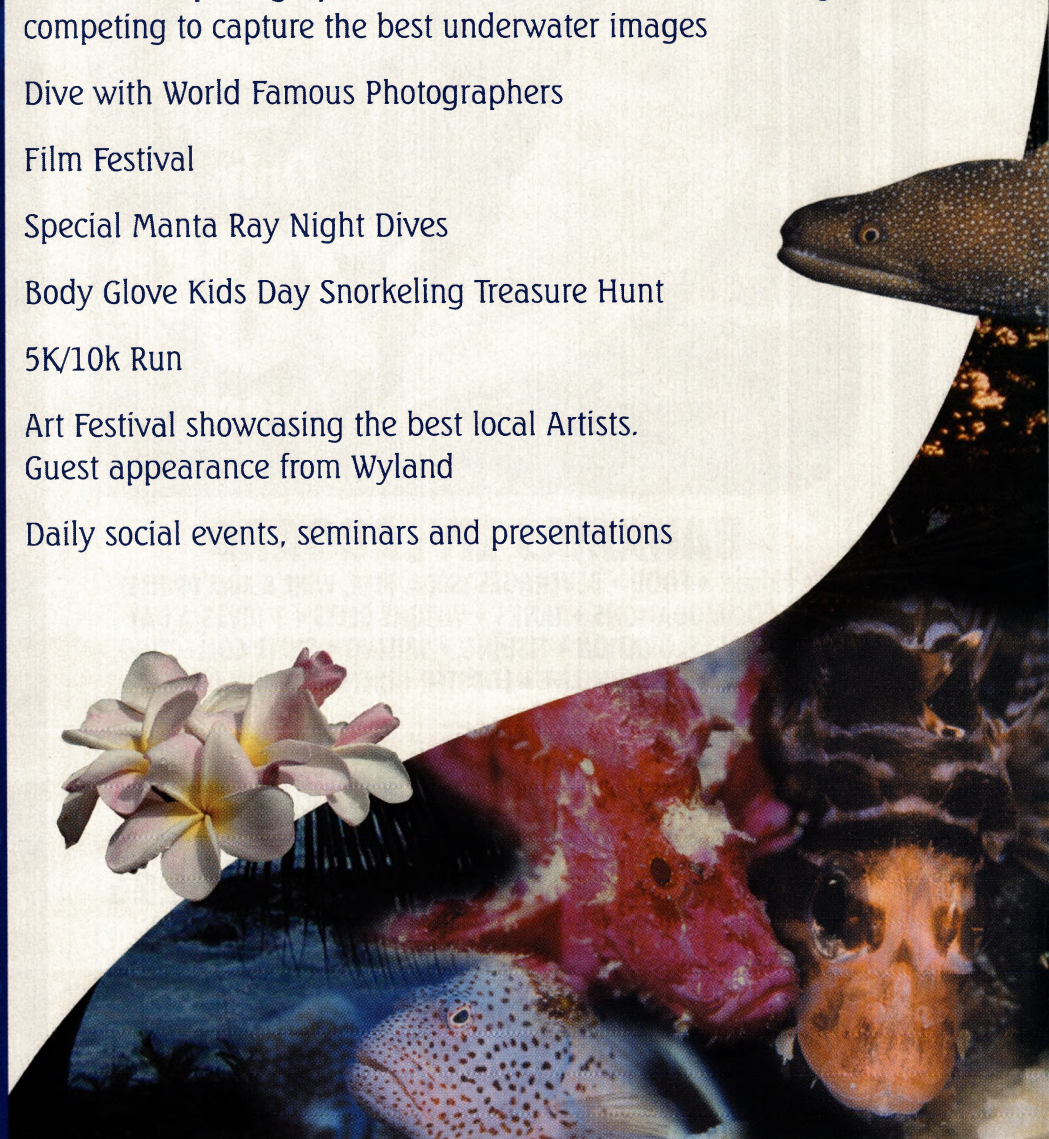
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Kona Classic Underwater

A close second to the diving was the camaraderie of the critique room. Every day, hopeful photographers returned from their dives



Participants in the Kona Classic event had plenty of things to do all week: Parties, diving, critiques, festivals and more made the weeklong event fun for locals and visitors.



and the room would buzz with excitement.

You could hear divers all around saying "Check this out!" and "How'd you do that?" It was a workshop that all levels of divers could learn from. Besides, where else can you hang out with David Fleetham or Marty Snyderman, while talking f-stops and strobe settings?

Also a huge hit was the film festival, which drew over 300 attendees who were given a glimpse at the astonishing work of Bob Talbot and Norbert Wu. Even the local participants got into the swing of things; by the end of the week we had over 150 people at the closing party, where Wyland gave out trophies and scholar-

Photography & Art Festival

ships for a local children's art contest. Winners of the Kona Classic won Oceanic and Scuba Pro regulators and dive computers; Sea Vision masks, Body Glove wetsuits; dive vacations; and more.

From *Skin Diver* hats to incredible dive vacations, everyone went home with something. But the real prize was much big-



ger than that: A chance to learn from photo pros; hang out with some really great people; visit a beautiful island; and make new friends. Oh, and the diving was pretty cool, too. 🐠

Special thanks to Big Islands Visitors Bureau, Body Glove, Aqua Lung, Sea & Sea Cameras, Fuji, Pelican Products, Oceanic, SeaLife ReefMaster Cameras, Harvey's Wetsuits, Sea Vision Masks, Aloha Airlines, Royal Kona Resort, Jack's Diving Locker, Kona Coast Divers, Scubaradio, Hammerheads, DAN, Zac's Camera, Kona Brewing Company, B & L Bikes, Wyland Galleries and Eco-Adventures.

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In Memoriam: Hugh Parkey

HUGH PARKEY, OWNER/MANAGER of the Belize Dive Connection, has died. He suffered a heart attack on June 14, 2002, while vacationing in Cancun with his wife, Teresa, and friends. He was 56.

Parkey's career in the dive industry had many facets. He worked as an instructor; commercial diver, boat captain; resort and dive operation man-

ager; licensed tour guide; and travel agency operator. Born in Louisiana on October 7, 1945, Parkey moved to California with his family in the 1960s and began diving later that decade. In 1974, he took a NAUI instructor course with Mike Burke, who became his best friend. Both later became PADI instructors as well.

While in California, Parkey worked



for several dive shops, ran the scuba programs at a university and a college (which he attended), and harvested kelp and sea urchins as a commercial diver. He moved to Belize in 1985 as the part owner/captain of a live-aboard dive boat. In 1987, Texas diver Teresa Trail was a guest on the boat. Parkey proposed to her 10 days after they met and they were married in 1988.

Hugh and Teresa managed the Turneffe Island Lodge, then bought the Fort Street Restaurant and Guest House in Belize City, which Teresa managed while Hugh set up the dive operation at Turneffe Flats Resort. He later managed Captain Morgan's Retreat on Ambergris Caye.

In 1996, Parkey and Burke opened their own business on the dock of the Radisson Fort George Hotel in Belize City. The Belize Dive Connection offered dive trips to the barrier reef and two atolls as well as inland tours. Parkey, a big man with an infectious personality, ran the diving part of the operation. Besides an incredible knowledge of dive sites and fish identification, he was considered a standard bearer of safety and experience among Belize's dive operators.

Parkey's body was cremated and his ashes scattered at one of his favorite dive sites, The Elbow, off Caye Bokel.

Along with Teresa, Parkey leaves his sons from a previous marriage, Chuck, 37 and Joel, 33. —Bonnie J. Cardone

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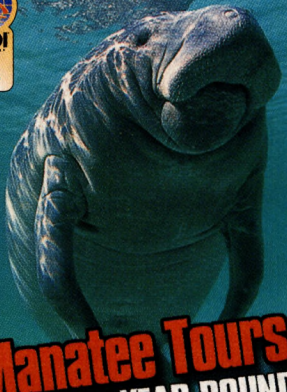
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Wishing You... a Wet Holiday Season

Great Gift Ideas from Oceanic

IF YOU'RE READING THIS PUBLICATION, NOT ONLY ARE YOU A diver with a wish list of your own, you probably have a few others on your shopping list as well. Your friends at Oceanic wish to help take some of the stress out of the holiday season by offering the following suggestions.

ZETA

A favorite of dive industry professionals and leaders, the Zeta is one of diving's most unique regulator designs. The Zeta uses a special valve mechanism, generally referred to as a servo-assisted pilot valve, to create an amazingly effortless breathing system. This breathing system is so natural and effortless that, in many cases, the Zeta can actually improve your comfort and breathing efficiency on scuba. The Zeta accomplishes this with an ingenious two-chamber balanced design that provides pressure-assisted airflow and near zero inhalation effort, all in a tiny, super-light package that's barely wider than the mouthpiece.

The Zeta's small size is a function of its servo-valve technology. It is nearly impossible to attain the level of performance in such a small package with a conventional demand valve design. Oceanic brought the servo-valve to recreational diving with the revolutionary Omega. Seventeen years later we have perfected it with the Zeta.

MSRP: \$639.00



DELTA 3 / TDX5 TITANIUM

Size and weight are of utmost importance to today's diver. With metal components machined from the highest quality titanium alloy available, the Delta 3 Titanium is a rugged, corrosion-proof and unbelievably lightweight second stage, boasting the same high performance as its standard brass counterpart. The Delta 3 allows you to adjust your breathing effort in order to fine-tune the regulator to your personally desired setting. Increasing the breathing resistance eliminates free-flows on surf entries or long surface swims. Decreasing the breathing resistance to near zero makes your breathing during the dive as comfortable and natural as it can possibly be.

But simple adjustment isn't what makes the Delta 3 so unique. The Delta 3 also incorporates a patented Dynamic Adjustment feature that automatically readjusts the inhalation effort you set at the surface, so it's the same at any depth of your dive. No fiddling with adjustment knobs at deeper depths or as you make your way back to the surface. Just set it and go.

In the (+) or "dive" position, the A.V.S. deflector vane found in the Delta 3 directs airflow from the valve directly to the mouthpiece, producing smooth, venturi-assisted inhalation. In the (-) or "pre-dive" position, airflow is diverted to prevent free flow on the surface. This simple device allows factory or field service personnel to adjust the Delta 3 for peak performance, and enables the diver to eliminate surface sensitivity found in other second stages.



The TDX5 balanced diaphragm first stage offers all of the advantages of the CDX5 first stage's incredible performance, but it also includes all of the advantages of being machined from solid titanium. Made from the highest quality titanium alloy available, the TDX5 is incredibly rugged and corrosion-proof, yet still unbelievably lightweight. With its standard environmental seal, it is the perfect regulator for diving in extreme conditions. The TDX5 is undeniably one of the best and lightest first stages ever produced. MSRP: \$1,259.00

GAMMA 2

The Gamma 2 regulator is the perfect mix of two worlds, incorporating the award-winning performance of the high-end Delta with the budget

sensitive Alpha. Emerging from our design tables smaller than the Alpha and lighter than the Delta, it may have the best cost-to-performance ratio of any regulator on the market today.

The A.V.S. deflector vane found in the Delta 3 is also utilized in the Gamma 2 to guide airflow from the valve directly to the mouthpiece, producing smooth, venturi-assisted inhalation. In the (-) or "pre-dive" position, airflow is diverted to prevent free flow on the surface.

MSRP: \$379.00

GT / PX2

The lightest second stage in the Oceanic line-up, the GT shares many common parts and design features with the Delta 3, without the bells and whistles (or switches and knobs in this case). The GT's housing is made from an ABS/Polycarbonate composite blend of materials, making the GT both extremely rugged and lightweight, reducing jaw fatigue on extended dives. The extremely lightweight cover ring is machined from a solid piece of aircraft aluminum, then hard anodized, utilizing a unique process to prevent corrosion.

The PX2 balanced piston first stage has been engineered to deliver incredible performance while offering all the convenience and comfort possible. A flow-through stainless steel main piston provides all the air that you can demand at any depth or tank pressure. The rotating turret that houses the low pressure ports positions second stages and inflator hoses right where they

are wanted. Two high-pressure ports and the absence of a dedicated top or bottom allow pressure gauges to be placed on either side of a diver, and make the regulator most comfortable for divers of any height.

MSRP: \$339.00

(Another second stage with similar features to the GT is the GT Octo. MSRP: \$139.95)

ALPHA 7 / SP4

Made specifically for use with Oceanic's Alpha second stage, the SP4 offers all divers the opportunity to own a top-performing regulator at an unbeatable price. Repeatedly rated as the best in its class, the Alpha SP4 exceeds both Navy Class A and European CE standards. The Alpha SP4 might have been the first regulator you ever used due to its widespread use in rental and resort operations. MSRP: \$239.00

SWIVEL 180 OCTO

The octopus is an often-overlooked piece of equipment for a diver. It is expected to be unobtrusive, but ready at a moment's notice in an emergency. In this respect, Oceanic's Swivel 180 Octo is the ultimate in function and reliability—everything an octopus should be.

The unique side exhaust creates an ambidextrous design without a "right side up." With the Swivel 180 Octo, there is no concern whether a panicked, out-of-air diver will position the regulator correctly.

The inline swivel of the Swivel 180 Octo provides ultimate comfort and flexibility. Whether you choose to mount your alternate air source on the left or right, over or under your shoulder, or even upside-down, the Swivel 180 Octo performs as great as it looks.

MSRP: \$144.95

VERSA

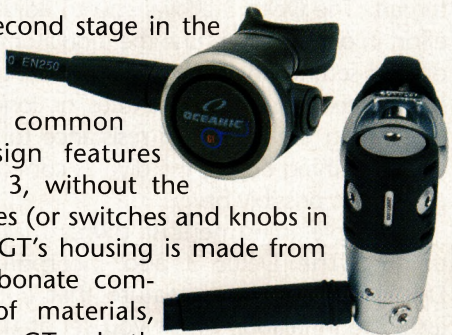
It's the ultimate in diving versatility. The Versa has something for everyone and it's as simple as just getting in the water. Want a little more? It's there—in big, bold images! Prefer minimal displays? No problem. You're in control!

Together with large, easy-to-read displays and Oceanic's patented tri-color bar graphs, this is a unit that will quickly become the standard for safe and enjoyable diving.

MSRP: Wrist: \$319.00

Combo: \$379.00

NavCon (shown): \$415.00



VERSA PRO

The Versa series of computers takes its name from their greatest asset: their versatility. The Versa Pro offers technologically advanced, interactive and versatile features that no other personal dive computer can match. These features include a wide variety of audible and visual alarms that can be acknowledged and deactivated; four custom display settings that can be changed before, after or during a dive; and even the ability to activate through water contact or with the simple press of a button. At Oceanic, our design philosophy is simple: Let the diver decide. The Versa Pro offers you the opportunity to have the computer that you want, and change that decision between or during dives.

Since the early 1970s, Oceanic has been building computers that have been praised for their clear, large displays and easy-to-understand graphics. The Versa Pro continues that tradition by providing the largest digits available on a modular computer today, our trademark green/yellow/red bar graph, SmartGlo backlighting, an LED warning light, audible and visual alarms, and helpful icons.

MSRP: Wrist: \$450.00

Combo (shown): \$538.00

NavCon: \$569.00



MAX DEPTH GAUGE

The heart of the MaxDepth Console is the 200-foot MaxDepth Gauge. Its air-filled diaphragm design allows an expanded shallow scale for better readability at sport diving depths, while still topping out at a hefty 200-foot/60-meter maximum depth. A large, luminous display face enhances the readability of the MaxDepth gauge even further.

Like sports car steering, the rack and pinion movement ensures smooth and precise operation year after year. Like the name implies, the MaxDepth gauge allows reference of the maximum depth after the dive by using a MaxDepth needle that can be easily reset.

MSRP: Combo: \$189.95

NavCon (shown): \$234.95



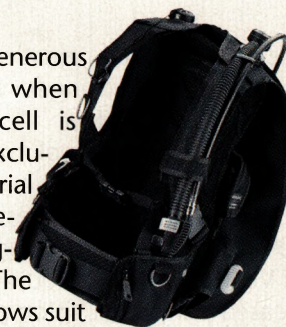
PRO TOUR BC

Oceanic's Pro Tour BC takes the popular original Tour BC to the "tech" side. We've added a unique new expandable, back-mounted air cell that retains its small shape and stealthy silhouette when empty, yet opens

up to provide a generous lift of 40 lbs. when filled. The air cell is made from our exclusive BioFlex material and is double-welded for long-term durability. The rest of the BC follows suit with tough 2100 Denier RhinoHide construction on all abrasion points, and heavy-duty stainless steel D-rings that are welded and slightly bent for one-handed attachment of accessory clips and gear. The new weight-integrated pockets are angled slightly farther back on this BC, keeping the front open to mount accessories.

Keeping true to its name, the Pro Tour BC also offers other features that make it attractive to the professional diver. A compact design and soft backpack for travel, two non-dumpable weight pockets, dual cylinder bands, three exhaust valves, weight integration and expandable zippered pockets are just a few of the features that the pro will appreciate in the Pro Tour.

MSRP: \$639.95



LITE VISION

Oceanic ingenuity in the form of three super bright LED lights that provide surprising illumination on your dive and high visibility for safety at the surface. The sealed on-off button activates the Lite Vision for a continuous beam or a flashing light.

The Lite Vision masks provide hands free illumination through the simple touch button operation of light emitting diodes (LEDs), which are strategically placed in the mask frame. Besides enabling users to read gauges during low light or night dives, they can also look closely at creatures in close quarters or under ledges during the day. Forget about the hassle of fumbling for that flashlight in your BC, this light is available at a press of the finger and follows your every focus point!

The Lite Vision also serves other important purposes besides providing hands free lighting. Three quick taps of the button will activate a continual flashing of the green LEDs at quarter-second bursts. In this mode, the mask can be used as a safety-signaling device both on the surface or below. Because of its innovative design, the Lite Vision also eliminates the need for chemical sticks, previously used by divers and snorkelers at night. Environmental experts have warned that these items can



UNDERREVIEW

cause harm to the aquatic environment, so many people are looking for alternative options such as this mask offers.

LITE VISION 1: A low volume, single lens design

LITE VISION 2: A 2-lens design that can accommodate corrective lenses (shown)

LITE VISION 3: A 3-window mask for increased peripheral vision

MSRP: \$124.95

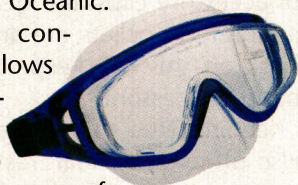
CONTOUR MASK

The ultra low volume Contour Mask is all new and only from Oceanic.

It incorporates a contoured frame that allows for an all-encompassing field of vision, while also allowing for a wide range of fit. Because of the low volume and wrap

around shape, the Contour creates a minimum amount of drag in the water and looks slick!

MSRP: \$64.95



VORTEX V12

Wave goodbye to the traditional paddle blade fin and say hello to the future of split-fin technology from Oceanic. The Vortex V12's performance advantage is achieved with the patented Nature's Wing technology and cutting-edge composite materials. By splitting the blade to generate highly efficient thrust or lift like an airplane wing, the strain on the muscles of the leg and hips typically found with paddle fins is reduced by allowing the water to drain between the dual blades. The Vortex series of high performance fins are specially designed to provide greater thrust and reduce muscle fatigue. The secret is in the dual blade that allows water to flow smoothly over the fin, creating less drag and greater propulsion. Greater speeds sustained over longer periods using a much more efficient flutter kick.

MSRP: \$189.95



AERDURA

Oceanic's Aerdura drysuit offers a combination of extreme durability, unmatched flexibility and comfort. After extensive independent laboratory and field-testing, the entire British Royal Forces and the Dutch Royal Navy agreed with us, each selecting the Aerdura as their sole diving drysuit. Cordura—the most durable and abrasion-resistant nylon made—is laminated onto the

outer shell of this suit to make it the toughest and stain resistant suit in the world. The unique gilled kneepads, contoured body panels and elasticized back panel allow the suit to move with a diver like a second skin. Ultraviolet protected latex seals, heat-sealed and taped seams, insulated boots and an exclusive heat reflective lining makes it as warm and dry as it is rugged and flexible.

MSRP: \$1,495.95



HYBEAM LIGHT

At only 6.5 inches, the Hybeam packs an exceptionally powerful beam of light. It gets its amazing intensity and 1.5-hour burn time from a computer-optimized reflector, halogen lamp and six watts of power. The switch allows one-handed operation and features a trigger lock that ensures the light won't accidentally turn on in your dive bag or BC pocket.

The Hybeam features a double O-ring seal, qualifying it to a depth of 200 feet. Four AA batteries and a wrist lanyard are included. Whether you are looking for an intensely bright light, an emergency backup, a spotting light for your strobe or an all purpose flashlight to peer into cracks and crevices during the day, the Hybeam is a great choice.

MSRP: \$34.95



SPINNER KNIFE

Designed to mount on an Oceanic BC, the Spinner Knives are a super compact solution perfectly suited for the streamlined diver. The solid 304 stainless steel blades feature razor-sharp smooth and serrated cutting surfaces, a line cutter, a metal butt for signaling and are available with a sharp or blunt tip. The compact quick-release sheath features a one-hand release and comes standard with leg or arm straps and a BC mounting bracket.

MSRP: \$38.95

Look for tear-out card—a gift to give or a gift to keep for yourself. Also see the enclosed special offer or visit our website to print your own. Offer expires 12/31/02.



THE NEW CHAMELEON MASK SYSTEM FROM SEAVISION brings together the best of the company's patented color-correcting and light-enhancing technologies to offer divers and snorkelers an unbeatable combination of options certain to improve and enhance each and every dive.

SeaVision Chameleon Adds Color to Your Mask

The Chameleon system delivers versatility for users through two uniquely designed mask shields that work like filters. The Color Correcting Filter that SeaVision is famous for (magenta or red lens) is designed for use in warmer waters where colors are more rich and vibrant. By using the Color Correcting Filter, users will have the opportunity to better experience the colors of the underwater world that are often lost at depth. And the MaxVision (yellow lens) is for use in low light conditions. Technical divers, cave divers and those diving in turbid waters around the world will benefit from this yellow lens filter that helps to optimize available light and help improve visibility at the same time.

Like a

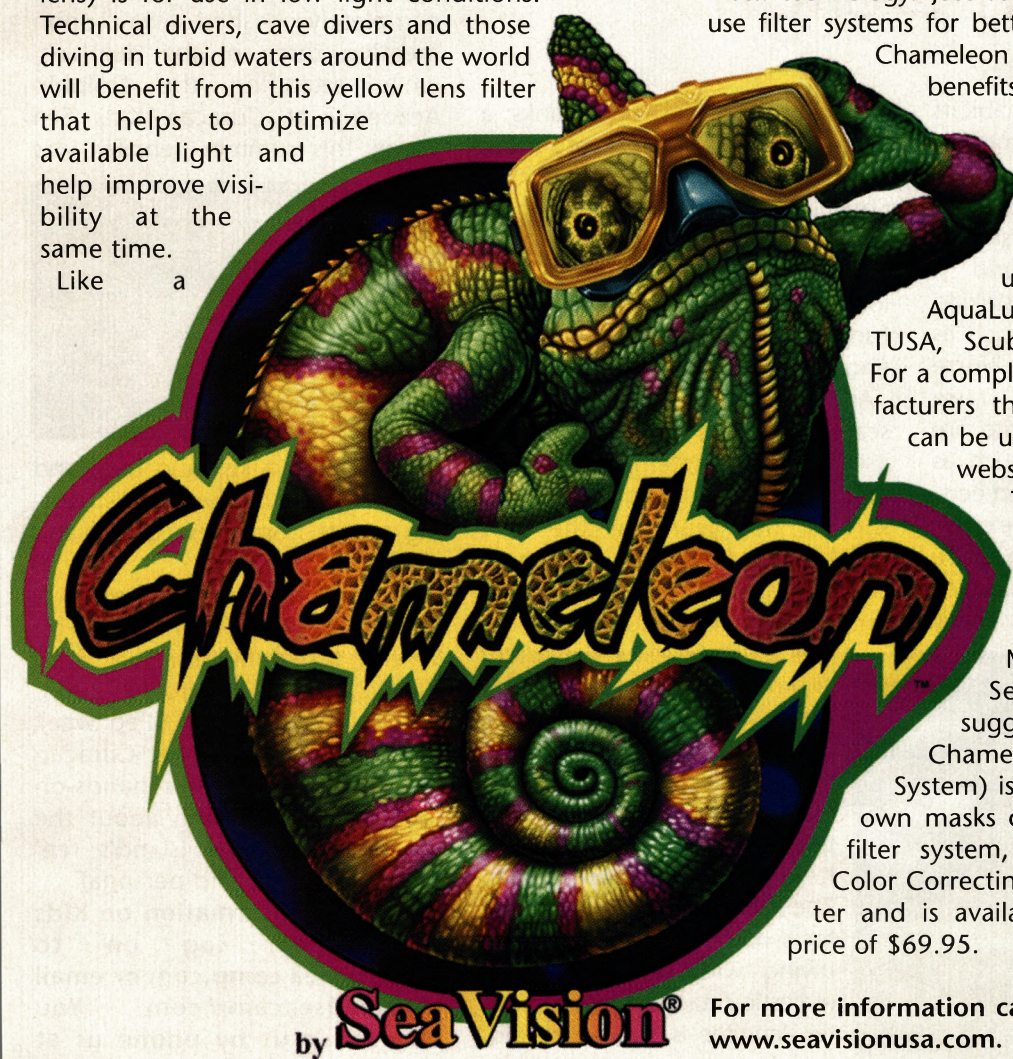
chameleon, an animal that can change its colors depending on its environment, SeaVision's Chameleon system also allows for versatility and change. In fact, the Chameleon system is so versatile that it can work with masks distributed by other companies. According to SeaVision Vice President of Marketing Alan Smith, the Chameleon system can easily be worn with masks from up to 10 well-known manufacturers.

"Ten years ago when we first introduced the SeaVision concept, people were skeptical," Smith points out. "No one believed that the mask would do what we designed it to do. Today, tens of thousands of divers around the world appreciate the features we have provided in our mask designs. The Chameleon system is the next phase in the evolution of dive mask technology. Just as underwater photographers use filter systems for better colors and imagery, the Chameleon system can deliver the same benefits to divers."

Smith said that current masks on the market that the Chameleon system could help improve include masks marketed under the brand names:

AquaLung, Oceanic, Ocean Master, TUSA, ScubaPro and several others. For a complete list of masks and manufacturers that the Chameleon system can be used with, visit the SeaVision website.

The Chameleon system can be purchased in a number of different variations. The complete system includes a Color Correcting Filter, MaxVision filter and SeaVision 2000 mask. The suggested retail price for the Chameleon CVS (Complete Vision System) is \$149.95. Divers with their own masks can purchase the Two-Pack filter system, which includes only the Color Correcting Filter and a MaxVision filter and is available for a suggested retail price of \$69.95.



For more information call (800) 732-6275, or visit www.seavisionusa.com.

DELIGHTFUL, ENTERTAINING, romantic, relaxing, historical, unspoiled and unforgettable—the composition of adjectives that come to my mind when I think of Curaçao. This little piece of Holland-in-the-Caribbean is in the Netherlands Antilles, just North of Venezuela.

It is estimated that the reefs around Curaçao support over 3,000 animal species. This does not include the diverse communities of organisms and invertebrates that make their home in the red man-

a five-star PADI facility run, in my opinion, as one of the most professional dive operations in the Caribbean. Spacious boats, numerous and flexible dive schedules, Nitrox, re-breather, specialty and certification courses as well as tek diving opportunities are available.

Just South of the Lions Dive & Beach Resort is the Curaçao Sea Aquarium. Unlimited admission is included for Lions Dive & Beach Resort and Sea Aquarium Resort guests. This is like no other aquarium I have encountered. Sea

Curaçao—A Caribbean Delight

TEXT BY MARGO CHORNLESKY

grove habitats and seagrass habitats that can be found in and amongst the many coastal lagoons. Most diving is five to 10 minutes offshore, and the health and diversity of Curaçao's underwater world is exceptional—vibrant reefs, striking corals and larger animals, such as Eagle Rays, turtles and Nurse Sharks, and huge schools of wrasse and chromis. But my favorite are the many smaller critters, such as seahorses, frogfish, octopi and eels.

Ocean Encounters is the dive operation for Breeze's new all-inclusive resort, Sea Aquarium Resort, as well as Lions Dive & Beach Resort. This is

Aquarium hosts 54 touch tanks; a Nurse Shark breeding program; the Curaçao tidal pool, containing Southern Stingrays and pink flamingos; and an underwater submarine viewing station that overlooks the in-ocean shark enclosure, turtle enclosure and animal encounter enclosure.

Another special treat is Chi Chi, the sea lion that has made a home for itself in the warm, temperate waters of Curaçao. But my greatest pleasure of this year was the new Dolphin Academy. Five Bottlenose Dolphins that once resided at Anthony Key in Honduras, now call the Curaçao Sea Aquarium "home." Copan (the dominant male) and four females seem very happy in their new in-ocean Curaçao habitat. And I was elated to hear that one of the females, Bonnie, is due to have her baby this September. The Dolphin Academy allows for swimming, snorkeling and diving with these beautiful, majestic cetaceans. My daughter Jennifer is five years old, and her apprehension of the



Relaxing along Curaçao's sun drenched shores.

water and marine animals was completely washed away upon meeting three of the dolphins, while attending the Dolphin Academy at Curaçao Kids Sea Camp this summer. Jennifer was



Kids Sea Camp includes dolphin kisses!

greeted with a kiss and hug, and was delighted by the friendly trusting nature from these gentle animals.

So, don't miss out on the annual Kids Sea Camp and Family Fun Weeks, scheduled for July 5 to July 12, and July 12 to 19, 2003. Kids will enjoy a fun-filled week of Sea Camp at the Curaçao Sea Aquarium, and a hands-on approach to learning about the inhabitants of the island's reef system up close and personal.

For more information on Kids Sea Camp, log on to www.kidseacamp.com or email kids@kidseacamp.com. You may reach us by phone us at 800-433-3483 or 954-467-0821.



THERE IS A NEW COMPANY IN TOWN with an old and well-known name...Bob Soto's! Recently purchased and renamed Bob Soto's Reef Divers, it is now under the charge of Dan Tibbetts, a renowned dive resort owner of dive properties in Little Cayman and Cayman Brac. He has started a face lift of this tried and true customer service oriented dive operation.

Reef Divers, in the Sister Islands, has always put the customer and their diving needs at the top of their list. Melding this tradition with the efficiency of

You can either dive the wall and explore to 100 feet, or stay on top of the wall and dive a shallow profile. Your second dive is a shallow reef or wreck dive to 40 or 50 feet. These choices in profiles allow each dive team to create the perfect dive for their skill level. The wall dive is guided, so you can leave finding the critters and the boat to the professional dive staff. Hey, that's their job, and you're on vacation! No stress necessary here!

Next came the new boat departure area. The dock has been



One of two new boats.

pon gather in the coral over growths. Some of these Tarpon are as large as five feet. (Sorry, no fishing allowed off this dock.)

No matter which hotel or condominium you are staying at on Seven Mile Beach, Bob Soto's will pick you up in one of their vans or buses. Yes, even the bus fleet has two new vans to make your transfer to and from diving comfortable and easy.

Bob Soto's Reef Divers Dive Training facility, a 5 star PADI Instructor Development Center is also in the re-vamp phase. A new van, used only for their training guests has recently been purchased, as well as a high-tech, multi media presentation system. This allows the student, from new diver through instructor training, to learn with the best equipment available. This dedicated training facility is the way to learn diving in a personalized setting, often just you and your buddy, or to increase your diving skills with a specialty course. Whatever class you are looking for, it is available.

There are many other positive changes in the Reef Diver family. For example the completion of The Signature Store. This stunning marine themed art and gift shop carries everything from Caribbean candles to Guy Harvey tile and canvas art. This store is on your must stop list for gifts to take back home for family and friends, located on the Harbour front, downtown.

For more information about Bob Soto's Reef Divers, visit www.bobsotosdiving.com.ky or e-mail bobsoto1@candw.ky.

SKIN DIVER NOVEMBER 2002 95

The New Bob Soto's Reef Divers (new owner, new boats, new attitude...same great staff!)

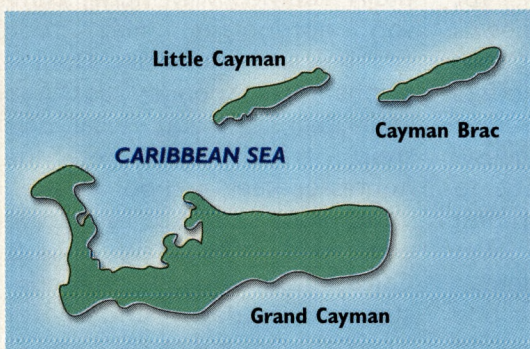
Bob Soto's, created the *new* Bob Soto's Reef Divers!

First came two new boats: a Pro 42-foot jet boat, *Reef Seeker*, and a 46-foot Newton v-hull, *Reef Diver II*. The addition of these boats made it even easier for the staff to keep up their commitment to spoiling their diving guests. The ability to quickly reach dive sites in these state of the art dive vessels has made the terrific diving in Cayman even easier to access. Leave the dock at 9:00 AM and be back for lunch.

Don't worry, there is still plenty of dive time for two spectacular dives.

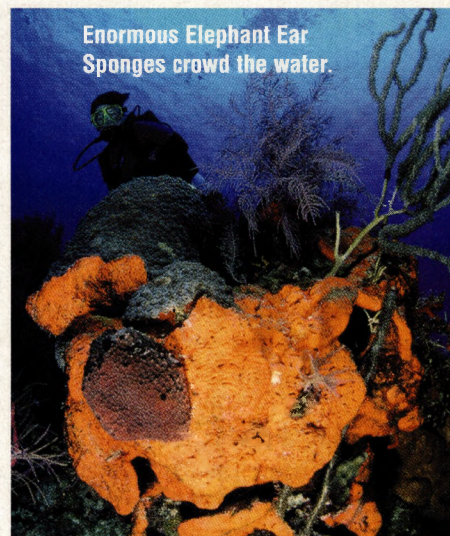
redesigned for easier customer access and a ramp added for the physically challenged. The dive shop has been completely refurbished, enlarged and made customer friendly. Inside, they offer sodas, fruit juices and other tempting delights, besides a bevy of T-shirts and other gift and dive items. It's also a great place just to hang out in the AC and listen to the newest "fish tale." There is always a good story after diving the surrounding waters of Grand Cayman. The North offers sheer walls; the West, sloping terrain covered in sponges; and the South serves up incredible shallow dives in Elkhorn Coral forests.

Outside, the patio has been set up for shore divers. There is a changing room, shower, outdoor access restroom and an easy entry to one of Cayman's best shore dives. In the afternoon, the tar-



FRENCH CAYE, WEST SAND Spit and West Caicos were once obscure dive regions, but today, they are on the top of almost every diver's "must dive" list. To meet the growing demand, the Turks & Caicos Aggressor franchise is building a new, 120-foot live-aboard, which can accommodate up to 20 divers in comfort and style. The *Turks & Caicos Aggressor II* will launch at the Seacraft Shipyard of Amelia, LA, in April 2003. Private staterooms

with en suite bath and DVD/TVs, a sprawling sun deck with hot tub and wet bar, and a large dive deck with gear lockers, huge camera table and in-place nitrox fills are just a few of the boat's many personal amenities. And like her predecessor, the *Turks & Caicos Aggressor II* will have an economically priced "quad" cabin for the diver on a budget. Vacations start at \$1,295 per person and include diving, on-board accommodations, meals, snacks between dives, local beer and wine, and service from

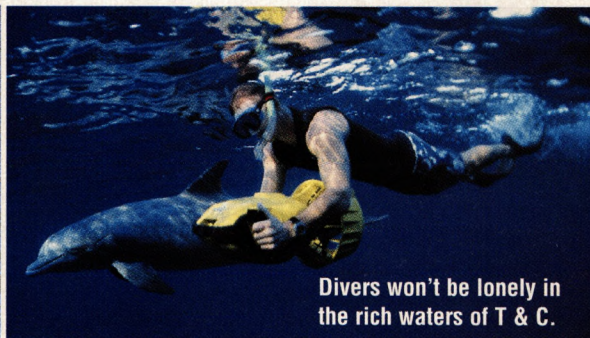


Enormous Elephant Ear Sponges crowd the water.

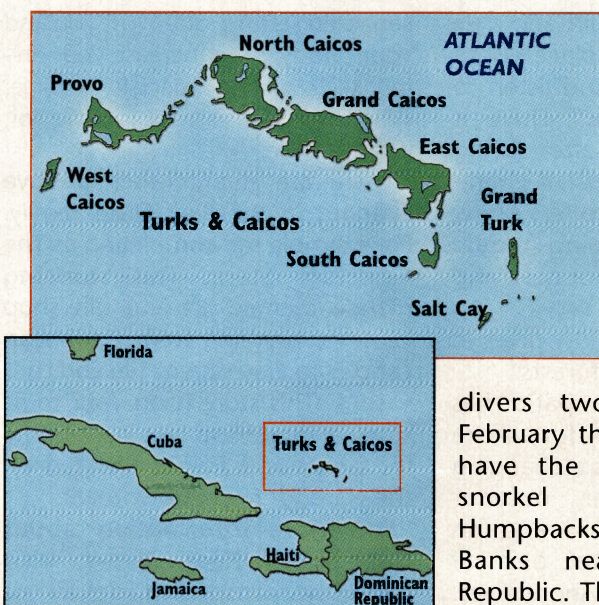
New Aggressor Yacht Defines Affordable Luxury



The awe-inspiring beauty of a breaching Humpback Whale.



Divers won't be lonely in the rich waters of T & C.



a professional crew. Divers and clubs can book weekly Aggressor Fleet adventures; the boat can also be chartered by private groups, families or corporations for special itineraries.

The *Turks & Caicos Aggressor II* offers divers two exciting options. February through March, guests have the rare opportunity to snorkel with migrating Humpbacks Whales in the Silver Banks near the Dominican Republic. This marine park is one of the few places in the world

where humans are allowed face-to-face softwater encounters with the whales.

The second itinerary features spectacular wall dives off Providenciales, West Caicos and French Caye. Sheer walls, which begin at about 40 feet, are beautifully adorned with huge, crimson gorgonians, lilac rope sponges and enormous, Orange Elephant Ear Sponges. So, grab your gear, call your local dive shop, travel agent or the Aggressor Fleet, and go!

Call (800) 348-2628 to reserve your spot on the new *Turks & Caicos Aggressor II*. See construction updates under Hot News at www.aggressor.com.

OVERSEAS DIVERS' DIRECTORY

See Overseas Divers' Directory at www.skin-diver.com

Rates: \$760 for 6 months or \$1,140 for 1 year with activated link. PAYMENT MUST ACCOMPANY COPY via bank draft or international money in U.S. funds. Visa or Mastercard accepted.

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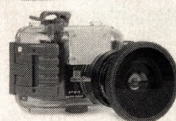
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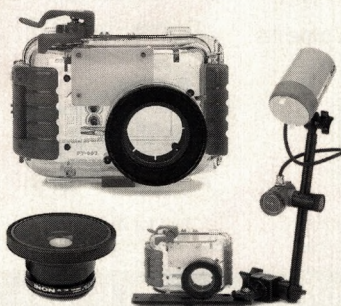
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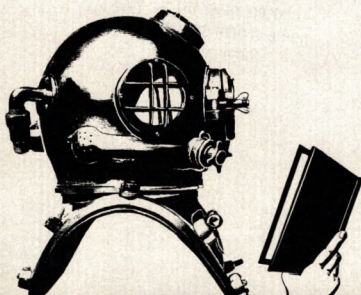
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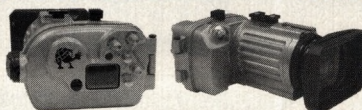
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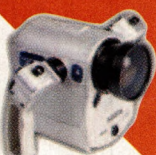
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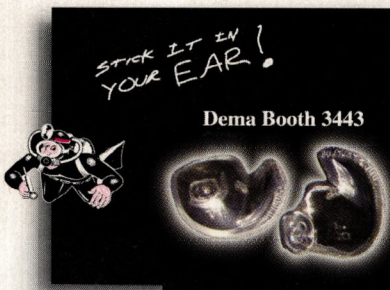


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An underwater photograph with a blue tint. In the upper right, a diver in full gear is seen from behind, swimming upwards. Bubbles trail from the diver's equipment. In the lower left, the dark silhouette of a coral reef is visible against the lighter blue water.

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TEK DIVERS LOVE TO OPINE ABOUT THEIR gear. We diatribe about the merits of this regulator versus that; the inherent benefits of Complexoplanner deco software over Simplaplanner (and vice versa); or why the Kevlar gloves are better than steel chain mail. But you don't often hear long discussions about fins.

A fin is a big rubber or plastic chunk that gives your leg something to push against. Strap 'em on and kick. What more can there be to it? Well, for the tekker, there are some considerations the recreational diver might not have. So let's opine about fins for tek.

Vents or Splits

Anyone in tek diving knows that you need a full-sized power fin. You're not going to push doubles and four or five stage/deco bottles wearing snorkeling fins. But in power fins, there's a myriad of fin blade styles. Some have vents. Some don't. Some split length wise down the middle.

Some don't. What are these for? I'm no engineer (so no hate mail if I'm not ultra technically correct), but:

Vents: The theory behind vents is water passes through blade areas that would otherwise waste energy without contributing to motion. In theory they work, but honestly, I have not noticed a huge difference between fins with vents or without.

Splits: Vents came in during the 1960s, but the split is a new comer. The idea is the split shapes the blade to drive water straight back, increasing efficiency during the kick.

Some people swear by them, and engineers insist that they're far superior, but you don't see many tekkers using them, including me. But the reason, I think, has to do more with kicks than splits. The split fin's effectiveness is based on the flutter kick, but many tekkers—especially cave divers—seldom flutter kick. They frog kick, and the split fin doesn't seem most effective for frog kicks. But to be fair, my friend Grant Graves tek dives in split and unsplit

Pedal Power

fins. When he's cave diving, he uses unsplit fins and frog kicks. When he's open water tekking, he uses split fins and flutter kicks.

All Rubber or Composite

You probably know that most modern fins consist of composite rubber foot pockets with plastic blades. However, some tekkers swear by all-rubber fins. Composite fins are lighter (nice when you travel); all-rubber are heavier (some like this with dry suits). You can get either vented, ventless, split or splitless. Use whichever performs for you.

Straps

Assuming you're using a power fin, the fin straps may be a bigger concern than the blade. In the old days, cave divers always taped their fin straps above the wire-frame buckles. This assured no slippage and closed the line trap between the strap and the loose end. With modern fin buckles you don't see that as much—which may or may not be good. If your fin has the loose end retainers, holds adjustment and retightens easily on the fly—fine. If not, tape the straps. Losing a fin is more than an inconvenience when tek diving.

In the 1970s, Farallon released fins with a strap made from a spring. They were great—difficult to break, nothing to slip or adjust. In the 1980s, Oceanic continued with spring strap fins, and spring straps that fit other brands. They had a loyal following, but too small of one to make it worth continuing production. Personally, I loved them, wore out three sets and only stopped using them when I couldn't get them any more.

Today, they're back. For the tekker, they're worth considering.

Color

I like black. It's a tek thing.

Karl Shreeves is VP, Technical Development for DSAT and PADI. He's winner of both the Wakulla and Abe Davis awards. 🐟



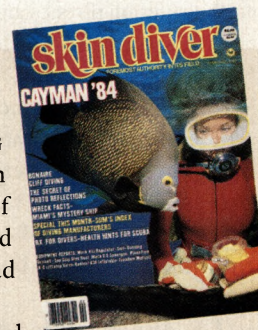
Each month *Skin Diver* looks back through its pages in search of those little nuggets of yesteryear—old equipment, trends of the time, new discoveries—that echo the times and may surprise or shock us. It's good to know your roots and how discoveries of old have helped shape diving of today.

1984

Bonaire Cliff Diving

IN FEBRUARY 1984, BRUCE BOWKER TACKLED A LINE ABOUT DIVERS WANTING to take it to another level, literally, in Bonaire. Bowker teamed up with Stan Gdowski, a mountaineer and diver from New Jersey, to test the idea of rappelling down a cliff, while wearing full scuba gear. The undertaking proved successful, but the real rewards came upon entering the water at a site that had not previously been dived.

The sheer face down which they had rappelled continued underwater for about 35 feet, before flattening out to a 50- to 70-foot ledge that eventually dropped off to several hundred feet. The area was covered in "corals of every description" and home to a variety of marine life. Word would spread and the site—appropriately named Rappel—went on to become quite popular. Most divers, however, chose to reach it by boat, as the trip back up the cliff proved a bit more difficult than the descent. 🐟



1975

Construct An Artificial Reef

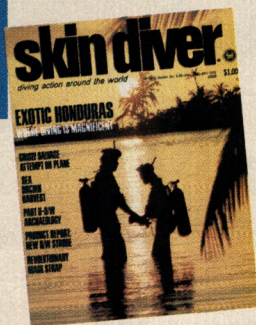
BILL BARADA INTRODUCED *SKIN DIVER* READERS TO A TRASHY TOPIC back in May 1975—building artificial reefs out of everyday "junk."

Barada reminisced about how he and fellow divers had constructed lobster-luring "sleepers" out of bathtubs, tires, sinks, toilet bowls and such in the '50s.

But he warned that the situation had changed over the years, as "...artificial reef-building is now enmeshed in red tape under local, state and federal regulations..." This was a good thing, however, seeing that if abused, the practice could turn the ocean into a water-logged junkyard.

Old automobile tires were recommended as the best reef-building material, on account of their durability, non-toxicity, and being easy to handle with cars and small boats. Also, sinking them proved much healthier than burning them.

Has anyone put in a phone call to Firestone? 🐟



1955

Anglers Defeat Spearfishermen in Contest

NOVEMBER 1955 HAD BILL BARADA SPINNING A YARN ABOUT SKIN DIVERS TAKING part in a contest that resulted from a long-standing squabble between the spin tackle enthusiasts (spinners) and conventional anglers (plungers) off the coast of California. The spinners and plungers had been casting accusations at each other for years, but despite their differences, both groups believed that skin divers "...loused up fishing for everyone and were worse than seals in the water."

Thus, the three groups loaded onto one boat, each determined to prove the most proficient at bringing back the fish. The skin divers, however, gave such a poor performance that the other groups began to feel sorry for them. It was even speculated that they were deliberately throwing the contest, since photographs and skin diver propaganda had created such high expectations for the group. In the end, the spinners caught the prize, and all "...learned that spinners, plungers and skin divers can fish from the same boat, have a wonderful time and everyone catch fish." Although, some more than others. 🐟



MID-WEEK IN PALAU, IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT Blue Corner was the scheduled noon dive. The live-aboard divemaster clanged the bell and the passengers assembled for a briefing. My thoughts were on my camera gear and the impending, award-winning photographs to come. Surely, the briefing distilled to a simple mantra: Go down, see cool stuff, and according to the rules of physics and safety, come up.

A few words filtered through my cerebral fog like “current” and “hook.” I scoffed at the current warning, as I had earned my fins at Cocos Island, where unforgiving water turbulence can tussle a diver in more directions than mapquest can process. And after the briefing, I obligatorily tucked away one of the “hooks” divvied up by the crew.

The dive was spectacular. Immaculate walls were coated with hard and soft corals. The giant sea fans looked particularly remarkable and the critters drew me deeper. The blinking LED on my camera announced that I shot off my 36 exposures in less than five minutes.

I was at depth and started to work my way up the wall. I looked down at my computer—three minutes of deco registered. No worries, *beaucoup* air in the tank.

A large wrasse nosed in to check out my mask. I was

I started whizzing along the wall, but

managed to maintain my controlled ascent....Perhaps, at this time, the divemaster’s words about “hook in” were supposed to mean something.

inspecting the topography of its snout when I realized the current was picking up—*fast*. I started whizzing along the wall, but managed to maintain my controlled ascent. I felt secure that the chase boats were following my bubbles, so I kicked back for the ride. Perhaps, at this time, the divemaster’s words about “hook in” were supposed to mean something.

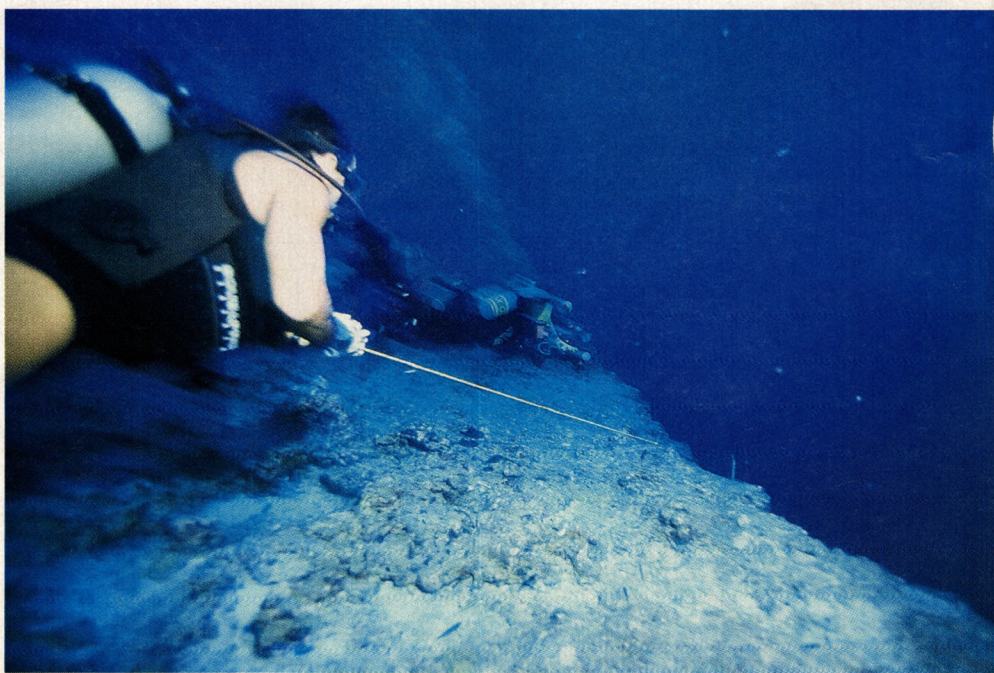
The crest of the wall was now visible from my depth. Ahead, I caught sight of several divers tethered to the lip of the wall. They looked like quadra-limbed people-kites blown to full extension in an underwater gust. I fumbled blindly and searched for the metal hook. Now I was blazing through the water and only moments from the precipice. I found the hook, and for the first time I took a good look at the thing—it was a huge claw. Up and over a large rock and...snag! I flipped around and the line unraveled and snapped me back. It was the scene in the movie where the hero almost plunges

over the cliff only to be saved in a split second by some unbelievable stroke of luck. I began to relax and watch the sharks cruise over the blue abyss and smaller fish dart between the anchored divers.

In the same scene in the movie, it never fails that the hero isn’t out of the pickle yet. The bad guy lives, or the errant patch of snow makes our hero start sliding down the cliff again, wishing she would have listened about the hook.

So be it that my waistband snapped. I was wearing an old horseshoe, modeling BC that looks great in photographs, but lacks in comfort and stability. Within seconds, my left shoulder strap also sprang loose. The current ripped past. I turned my head to survey the condition of my third and only remaining BC strap. My mask started to flutter—a couple

Blue Corner Conundrum



more degrees and it would have been gone, leaving me blind.

I recalled the three minutes of deco I had read on my computer before my ascent. More bad news. The current was pulling my gauges and I could not reach my instruments to check my status.

What happened next? If you recall your standard movie plotline, a friend of the hero (or hard-headed diver who didn’t listen) comes to the rescue. Two fellow divers swam over. One grabbed my camera and the second quickly carried me over to an eddy. He flipped me over and straddled me (later to be mocked for the suggestive-looking position). Both straps were rigged to a close, and my computer reported that my “respite” at the crest had taken me out of decompression.

I completed a 15-minute safety stop that day while contemplating how I would listen more closely to future dive briefings. 🐡 —BY GEORGIENNE BRADLEY

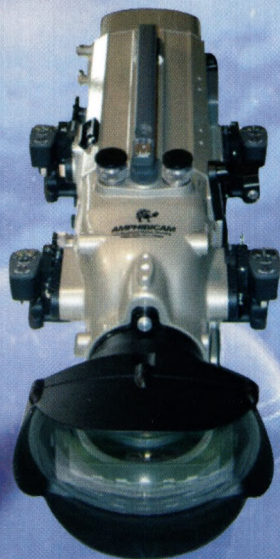
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